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# The SMART SET

*A Magazine of  
Cleverness*



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JUNE, 1912

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# THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF  
CLEVERNESS

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## The July SMART SET A Foretaste

The Magazine of Cleverness



For Minds That Are Not Primitive

**A** MONTH FROM NOW the unwritten law says we men can get out our straw hats, and so once more be on an even footing—or rather heading—with our more favored sisters. And a jokesmith in extremities once said that when a man puts off his heavy derby he takes a weight off his mind. Therefore we foresee that when the July issue of *THE SMART SET* appears upon the news-stands it will greet a public emancipated from the fetters of fashion and primed to enjoy good summer vacation reading.

Most magazines languish in the summertime; *THE SMART SET* is in its heyday. The July number has been planned particularly to appeal to what we might term the summer population. Take a copy along on the train or on the steamer; it can't fail to make a big hit with you—for it's got the stuff in it!

**THE COVER DRAWING WILL BE** a golf picture, in Alonzo Kimball's happiest vein, and there will be an amusing epigram with it which will emphasize the fact that the game of golf is part of another more important game—the game of life. The frontispiece will be a beautiful painting by André Castaigne dealing with the classical subject of Hero and Leander.

**THE COMPLETE NOVELETTE** will be "A Paid Husband," by Forrest Halsey. It is a finely executed piece of work in which appear half a dozen very interesting modern types. The story deals with the marriage of a wealthy girl to a son of one of the "old families." She discovers that his prime motive in marrying her was to get the use of her money to save his brother who has committed forgery. This situation brings out the pride, nobility and sweetness of her nature and it puts her husband through a purifying fire of emotion.

**TWO EXCELLENT STORIES OF LITERARY LIFE** are "Wild Honey," by Edward Salisbury Field, and "The World," by Rita Weiman. They are very different

in treatment. In the first a woman gives up her literary ambitions for love; in the second literature scores a victory over its rival. In Miss Weiman's story a grave problem is presented for women to think over.

**WELL AND FAVORABLY KNOWN** to *SMART SET* readers is Leroy Scott, who contributes "The Odalisque" to the July number. It is a dramatic little story of a model in a department store who meets a magnetic man of few scruples. But this is not the usual story of the Rich Young Man and the Beautiful Shopgirl. If it were, it would not be in *THE SMART SET*.

**HIGH JINKS IN NEW YORK** during the tour of an East Indian prince is the subject of Michael White's story "The Nawab's Bear Rope." To say it is full of laughs classifies it but does not do it justice. "The Regeneration of Poppengill," by Earle Snell, is a story of college athletics that will strike a thrill into the very marrow of every man who ever competed in an athletic contest or who ever watched one. Ellis Parker Butler, author of "Pigs Is Pigs," contributes a sketch called "The Ramatapaniyopanishad." We will not attempt to catch its essence in a sentence. It is Ellis-Parker-Butlerian. Enough said. There will be many other stories by such goodwriters as Elizabeth Jordan, Hector Alliott, Charlotte Teller, Archibald Sullivan and T. L. Holliday.

**IF YOU HAVE EVER READ** any of Francis Grierson's work ("Modern Mysticism," "The Celtic Temperament," "Parisian Portraits") you will be impatient to get his essay, "Snobs and Snobbery," in this July issue.

**THERE WILL BE, AS USUAL,** a clever one-act play, a little story in French and the usual quota of bright and amusing epigrams and quips. H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan will contribute articles respectively on the books and plays of the day.

Whenas in silks my Julia goes  
Then, then (methinks) how sweetly flows  
That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see  
That brave vibration each way free;  
O how that glittering taketh me!

—ROBERT HERRICK



WHENAS IN SILKS MY JULIA GOES . . . .

*From a Drawing made specially for The Smart Set by Garth Jones*

# THE SMART SET

*Its Prime Purpose is to Provide Lively Entertainment  
For Minds That Are Not Primitive*

## CASA TANAGRA

By Gertrude Lynch

"O H, Contessa!"  
"Yes—yes?"  
"She's gone, at last!"  
"At last!"

There was a joyous, birdlike tone to the monosyllables with which Contessa Eleanora Albergati repeated the pretty *contadina's* exclamation, quite incongruous with the sadness of her expression. She rose, descended the broad marble steps of Casa Tanagra, hurried across the intervening space of sward bordered with white rose bushes and seized by the arm the pretty peasant girl who had shouted to her, after cautiously looking over her shoulder to be sure there was no one in sight or hearing.

"When did she get away? Did you find the note she promised to leave in the shutter? Does old Giuseppi suspect?"

Without waiting for an answer from the girl, who was panting for breath with the hurry of her coming, she exclaimed with deep feeling:

"Oh, I am so glad, so glad! The poor child—how she has suffered! How brave she has been! I was afraid at the last she might lose her courage. It is a great step to take, that step into the unknown."

She stopped short, and Caterina took up the thread of her ejaculation.

"Nobody knows how she managed it. She must have gone late yesterday. I found her message when I opened the shutter to let the sunlight in to dress by. It was crumpled a little and wet with the dew. Here it is."

She drew a bit of torn-edged paper from her embroidered pocket and handed it to the Contessa, who opened it and read the "Farewell" written in a thin, nervous, spidery scrawl.

It was a signal of departure agreed upon, and the Contessa breathed a sigh of relief. She had passed many a sleepless hour, an insomnia caused by the runaway's affliction.

"Old Giuseppi doesn't grasp it yet," said Caterina, looking through the avenue of trees thick with blue-black shadows, as if her curious glance might follow the fugitive. "At least, he acts as if he didn't. He hasn't stormed and raved a bit. He is quiet, almost too quiet."

She shivered, changing the trend of thought as if desirous of shutting out a too fresh memory of unpleasantness.

"The steamer leaves tomorrow afternoon. If all goes as we planned, she will reach Naples some time today. She'll have a quiet night in the convent, will she not? It was good of you to plan for that, Contessa; and before she has



time to get her breath she'll be on her way to America."

As Caterina uttered that magic word, her face became suddenly grave. She shaded her dark eyes with her small hand and gazed pensively into the luminous distance unsped by even the tiniest cloud, a perspective of eternity at whose apex was the strange land which had in a few years swallowed up so many of those dear to her, friends, father, sweetheart. None of them had returned, and even the promises made at their departure were no longer repeated. In the letters, laboriously worded, by which the facile-tongued Latin unconsciously states his belief in the superiority of the spoken word, with their formal phrasing and halting syllables, she had found little satisfaction for the aching heart of a stay-at-home. As they came, with longer and longer intervals between, she realized, with the lucidity of vision which companions the aching heart, the existence of alien ties which might never be uprooted.

Well, America was not for her, with her aged grandmother to take care of. So she had answered Martino the last time he had written, half-heartedly when compared with his early entreaties, that she come out to him. This was six months ago, and she had not heard since. Would it be the same with Beatrice, friend from cradle days? Would she forget so soon and so completely?

She made a pretty picture as she stood, her scarlet lips slightly parted; the raven hair, covered only on *fiesta* occasions, now carefully arranged with a pomegranate blossom over the ear. Her eyes were more than usually expressive, stimulated by the excitement of Beatrice's departure and the reawakened memories of other goings-away. She wore a blue linen gown and apron, stiffly starched and ruffled, and a string of bright-hued beads. The embroidered blouse of sun-bleached linen was cut *contadina* pattern, and as she raised her arms a moment and crossed her hands behind her head, the perfect modeling of muscles, browned by exposure and developed by hard work, was exhib-

ited with unconscious grace. She was the counterpart of the fugitive, or rather as Beatrice had been a year before when, in the poetic Southern language, they had been compared to two stars in the vault of heaven seen side by side, twin roses on a single stem.

Only a year ago! It seemed, both to the Contessa and her protégé, as their conversation bridged the distance of time, that it was much longer. Then old Giuseppe's wife, Beatrice's mother, had been killed as she was going merrily on her way with a basket of freshly laundered linen on her head, by the automobile of a reckless tourist, who had not even stopped to inquire the amount of damage inflicted but had taken advantage of the opportunity offered by the solitude of the highway and the twilight hour to speed to safety from peasant wrath and the rigors of a dilatory law.

For ten days after the accident old Giuseppe hid in the hedge with his gun, waiting the return of the "murderer," as he called him in the violence of his first frenzy and in the late mood which followed. Vengeance, unslaked, seemed to turn within and poison all the old time gentleness of the man whose love for wife and daughter was remarked in a country where the strength and expression of family affection are proverbial. His dreamy, introspective viewpoint toward life changed to one morose and embittered.

Formerly mending his nets, he had whistled or sung the folk songs, chatted with his neighbors, drunk deep, in the Italian peasant way, of the mere ecstasy of life. Afterward he had long unchanging fits of brooding, with outbursts of remorse for imaginary sins of neglect against the departed, and always an intense, malignant hatred of Beatrice, his daughter, who had accompanied her mother at the time of the accident but who had been too paralyzed by fear to shriek a warning or to remember any clues by which the owner of the automobile might be recognized. That Beatrice was an accessory to the crime he had no hesitation in saying, when neighborly interventions made excuses for his faultfinding necessary.

The grief occasioned by her mother's death and the rigors of a home where love had changed to hate altered Beatrice. From a pretty, rosy-cheeked *contadina*, she became thin and pale, with a hunted glance in her eyes and a startled way of looking over her shoulder at the slightest sound. She was no longer eager, animated, unreserved. Her father's moroseness was reflected in her own moods of brooding. Neighbors, affected by her unhappiness, remonstrated with her to no avail. First they offered pity, then advice. From both she turned away. Finally they threatened, finding these futile. "If anything happens to you, Beatrice," they said to her again and again, "remember, we warn you. Your father shall be punished to the limit of the law."

It was this threat which decided her. She could protect Giuseppe better by leaving him. If, in one of his blind gusts of passion which came like outbursts of Vesuvius, fierce rages of words and blows, he should kill her, he would kill not only his child but the only friend he had in the world. There would be scores to testify to the violence of his deeds; none—she gone—who knew of his innocence of intent. In classes of society far removed from those in which they dwelt these lapses into the brutal would be called by high sounding names and treated with scientific skill. Beatrice, vaguely realizing this, had once or twice thought to make appeal to such assistance, but she shrunk from the finality of a deed which might mean the incarceration of her father forever. She hid, as well as she could, the whole truth, never telling the depths of her physical and mental suffering even to her most intimate friend, Caterina.

In the neighborhood conclaves, which finally forced her to action, it was decided that she must go to America. Her passage was engaged and all preliminaries taken care of, as soon as her timid, half-hearted acquiescence was assured. Clematis Cottage, one of the detached buildings belonging to Casa Tanagra, was agreed upon for the headquarters of the conspiracy. Here were brought the traveling garments

and accessories secretly purchased. In the pocket of the coat was placed the purse containing the money for the passage and a bonus for the first few weeks in the strange country. To all the Contessa had generously contributed. The neighborhood had insisted on doing its share, allowing her, however, to change the steerage money into a sum sufficient for a second class passage, and to add several items to the generous equipment for the voyage.

Clematis Cottage could be reached only by obscure bypaths through the grounds of Casa Tanagra, by formal gardens and avenues of cypress trees. The key was always hung on a hook outside, the hiding place secured by a tangle of grapevines.

It was decided that no one must know the exact moment of Beatrice's flight. She had the choice of going a whole week before the steamer sailed, remaining in seclusion in the convent, where the Contessa had great influence. In that retreat a letter to the Mother Superior would secure her safety and care. Or she might wait until the last possible moment, just making the steamer, and so be doubly secure from the pursuit of an enraged parent.

It was only the going away that offered difficulties. The new life in the far-off country was made easy by the Contessa's foresight. She had addressed a letter to the manager of a lace school in New York and the ladies connected with the establishment, like herself interested in preserving the art of hand-made lace from extinction by commercialism.

In this letter she had recommended Beatrice to their attention, begging that they keep a watchful eye over her health and happiness, aware that the coroneted paper and her cosmopolitan prestige would effect all that she desired for her protégé.

These preliminaries took many weeks, for life moves slowly in Italy. In the beginning Beatrice made but one stipulation. She must be allowed to repay, little by little, her obligations. This the neighbors approved. They also promised her that in case her father re-

covered they would let her know at once that she might either send for him or return to Italy. Padre Amboise promised to expend any small sums of money she might send in his behalf. At the last she became strangely quiet, almost sullen. She spoke to no one of the contemplated departure, and avoided even Caterina.

The Contessa and Caterina had been the ringleaders of the mutiny against Giuseppi, but the other girls who came daily to Casa Tanagra were able coadjutors. Their resentment against him was so great that they did not sympathize with his daughter's patience. At times they were as bitter in their opposition to this as toward the father's cruelty. Arguments, cabals for and against, exaggerated rumors for months kept alive the excitement. One day Beatrice had thrown a note in Caterina's path, as the latter was on her way to Casa Tanagra; that was the week she was imprisoned and kept on bread and water. Another time the bobbins became suddenly silent, old Giuseppi breaking into the schoolroom and heaping curses on those who attempted to teach him his duty to his child, a child who had let her mother be killed before her eyes. What did they know?

Once Beatrice had come with deep scratches along her pretty cheeks, and had screamed with pain when someone had brushed against her arm, whose bruises were covered by her linen sleeve. It was this final outrage which decided Contessa and her pupils to wake the lethargy of the village into action, and with the assistance of the neighborhood threaten, not old Giuseppi, who would have been merely angered and perhaps more malicious in his parental treatment, but Beatrice herself.

So it is not surprising that the news of the going away was welcome. After the exaltation of the initial moment, however, the Contessa paled. She remembered threats made by one in authority over her if she should so far forget her rank as to mingle unduly in peasant troubles. "It is well enough," she recalled the phrasing, "to be a philanthropist, to teach pretty girls to

make pretty laces for a livelihood; but beyond that is the barrier of tradition. Do not destroy or ignore it." Then she shook herself free from the unwelcome thought.

"Come," she said softly, putting her long, slim hand, with its many jewels, on Caterina's arm. Together they hurried to the big room in an unused wing of Casa Tanagra where for a couple of hours every morning the Contessa, herself rarely accomplished in the art, taught the women of the neighborhood not only a means of present livelihood but an assurance as well against emigration, the curse of the beautiful land, robbing it slowly and surely of its best—the young people forced to alien shores by lack of opportunity at home.

As soon as the girls saw their faces they knew the truth. Swarming about the pair like a lot of bees, they forgot for the first time the respectful salutations which marked their usual acknowledgment of the Contessa's rank.

Caterina was obliged to repeat again and again what she had told the Contessa. She was interrupted repeatedly by eager questions.

"Old Giuseppi was sitting in front of his cottage, mending his nets. I said 'Good morning,' and looked over my shoulder as if I expected to see Beatrice at the window. Instead of the usual surly nod—you know the way he has of looking at you as if you were some horrid, crawling thing and he was stamping on you with his feet, and then going on with his work, as if, after all, you were not worth bothering about—he beckoned to me, and kept beckoning. I went up to him slowly. He waited until his little beady eyes were almost against mine and I could see deep down into the ridges of his face, then—well, I was scared and I ran back a few steps."

"Then?" This came in chorus.

"He laughed, that cruel laugh of his. How I hate it! Finally he said: 'You've been clever, you and she.'"

"He pointed first to me, then toward Casa Tanagra. I suppose by that he meant the Contessa."

"And after that?" The chorus was more breathless.

"He said: 'I suppose you thought old Giuseppe didn't know, eh?'"

"He laughed, chuckled and muttered under his breath. At length he lifted his net and commenced to work as if he didn't see me standing there still, for I didn't know what he suspected and I wanted to find out."

"What do you suppose he meant?" asked Margherita, Lucia, Pepita and the rest simultaneously.

"I thought he'd make a frightful fuss," said Margherita finally. "I thought he'd raise a hue and cry and get us out of our beds to listen to his curses, or come to the school as soon as it was opened as he did the other time, you remember."

The Contessa shook her head. She was as much surprised as were the girls at old Giuseppe's seeming indifference, the way of sarcasm rather than of violence in which he had accepted the loss of his housekeeper and wage earner, the safety valve, as well, of his disordered emotions. What did it really portend? What signified this absence of male-diction, of threats, even of search?

## II

"I was all trembling and felt white as a pillow slip," continued Caterina, hurrying to make herself once more the center of interest. "I tried to say something but I only stammered. I know I looked guilty, although I'd made up my mind to be perfectly innocent and perfectly at my ease. I wasn't either."

"After I'd stood like an idiot, first on one foot, then on the other, he turned and looked at me again. Finally he made a gesture, as if he were brushing away a fly."

"Run and tell them," he said. "They don't know it yet."

"He caught up his net and walked into the house. As he threw the door open, I could see the remains of the breakfast—the half-baked *polenta*—and beyond the unmade bed. For the first time I realized that Beatrice was really gone. I feared that it might not be true and that he had been playing with me;

that she was locked up again perhaps. You know how fearful you are that good things may not be so. I could see through the window in the back the path and the shine of the white road, like a wide *festa* sash, and then I looked again at the *polenta* and the unmade bed and I knew—I knew she was safe. I ran as fast as I could here."

"And that was all?"

"All but—"

She repeated for them anew her recollection of Giuseppe's gnarled fingers clutching the heavy cords and shuttles, the unshaven lips disclosing jagged teeth, tobacco-stained. His last snarl was like that of a maddened dog:

"Tell them they've done a good day's work to take an old man's child, the crutch of his lame age; but a cripple has strong arms, and he can reach far when necessary."

There was the bitter knowledge of the treachery of those about him in the accusation and a sub-intention of revenge when the hour struck.

Some of the girls fingered their crucifixes beneath their blouses, as Caterina repeated Giuseppe's words. Some muttered an "*Ave Maria*."

"I shall not go by Giuseppe's any more," said Pepita stoutly. "He has the evil eye." She crossed herself with elaborate gesture.

Lucia straightened her broad shoulders and stood with arms akimbo, hands on her generous-sized hips. "We know nothing. We've seen nothing. Who's afraid of black looks?"

She picked up her square of filet and commenced to work. The rest of the school followed her example and soon the usual quiet pervaded the room, broken only by occasional questions regarding a complexity of pattern or an ejaculation when a bobbin fell with its weight of thread.

But the silence could not last more than a moment—the events of Beatrice's departure were too insistently near; and after a certain time devoted to the morning's responsibilities, the exclamations broke out anew.

"If she should miss the steamer!"

"There's another in a week. She can

stay at the convent. The Contessa provided for that, don't you remember, in the note to Mother Theresa that was put in the pocket of the gray coat. It was a stylish coat, wasn't it? And gray has always been becoming to Beatrice."

"They say it is easy to make money in New York when you know how. They speak Italian everywhere—only you can't hear it; the railroads make so much noise. They run right on top of the houses."

"Beatrice promised to look up my cousin Marta. They will go to the *festas* together."

"I may see her before long." It was quiet little Angelica who spoke this time. "Tony's letter came yesterday. He wrote that he would have sent me money to come out to America long ago but there has been trouble in the newspaper trade. He is going to try to send it next time."

The Contessa was not there to hear all these intimacies of conversation. It was her habit to leave the girls alone, under a monitor's supervision, while she puzzled out some specially intricate pattern, examined the finished work and looked over the correspondence, which usually included letters from similar organizations, even so far as those of the New World itself, complimenting the perfection of system at Casa Tanagra or asking help in some difficulty. The old chests of the mansion had been ransacked and bits of lace, yellowed and falling to pieces with age, had been brought to light, their intricate designs deftly copied. Roman blouses hundreds of years old, altar pieces, stoles, chasubles, Juliet gowns, aprons and caps, panels, tabliers, bed and table covers had been so gracefully duplicated that the fame of the school had ceased to be local. Beatrice had been an indefatigable pupil. There was no question that her help in the New York school would be eagerly welcomed as soon as her letter was presented and her samples shown.

The Contessa's mind was not entirely devoid of pride as she visioned this placing of her protégé in the far-off land of her adoption. She herself had worked

hard, not only for the love of the work but to—forget; and this special reward seemed a fitting tribute to that devotion.

She waved good-bye to the class as usual from the balcony of her room, with a halo of wistaria above and a flush of morning glories below.

There was more than the ordinary impressiveness in the salutes passing to and fro. Each was thinking of the absent and the first break in the circle. Each was wondering when the next would come. Would it be Angelica, hastily summoned to America when the newspaper trade improved—Caterina, relieved of further duty by the death of her aged grandparent, prompting by her loneliness a tardy enthusiasm in the heart of her recreant lover—or someone else? In each waving hand and arm there seemed to be an unconscious interrogation.

There was a last gleam of red and blue gowns, a final twirl of supple fingers, then the trees shut the girls from the view of the balcony. For a long time the Contessa could hear the young voices. She listened eagerly; then, as the last sound died away, she sank back with a wearisome gesture of loneliness. With their going went the one bright spot in a colorless day. They were so dear to her with their simple joys and sorrows, their family differences, their love quarrels, their little envies of and big sympathies for each other, related to her so naively, inviting her advice and understanding.

It had seemed of late to her vigilance, never aggressive but always alert, that Beatrice alone of the little band had changed toward her, and this alteration could not be explained to her satisfaction by the fact of the girl's domestic unhappiness; there was something personal in it, something resentful. Was the contrast in their positions one that aroused the *contadina's* feeling? No, it could not be that—the tradition of caste was too strong; but if not, what could it be? Had she failed where she had tried so hard to be tactful and sympathetic?

Outside the school, the last time they had met was in the village street. She



had called her to the carriage door and asked: "Is there any fresh cruelty, Beatrice?" Beatrice, without looking at her, had shaken her head and slipped away.

But in the averted glance, in the shrinking of the body, she had read something that emphasized her vague suspicion. Then she laughed at herself. Was she, too, becoming morbid, brooding over another's troubles? She was so accustomed to being treated by her circle of pupils as if she were but a little below the angels that the slightest change in manner had become fraught with tragic meaning—as a queen fearing *lèse majesté*. She brushed the web of intricate thought away. Nothing could be the matter with Beatrice but her troubles, eating within and changing youth to old age with its crabbed temperament prematurely.

She pondered all this, anew, as she sat, silent and alone. There was nothing now to break the ennui of the day. The last order had been given to the housekeeper; the work of the lace class had been looked over and locked away. It is true she could walk or drive, she could receive or make visits. But she must do this alone, always alone, ever trying to get away from an unhappy self that pursued her remorselessly.

She felt a soft touch on her arm. It was Maria, who had returned. There was a new note of excitement in her voice, and she whispered eagerly:

"Dear Contessa, we forgot to see if Beatrice left a note in Clematis Cottage."

Contessa Eleanora rose hurriedly. "Of course. How forgetful we are! Don't wait, my dear. It could only be another word of farewell, and if it is there I will tell you in the morning."

She welcomed the interruption, and after a moment's pretended leisure following Maria's departure, she descended the steps and was soon lost to the view of the many windows of Casa Tanagra. She skirted a formal garden, and after following some circuitous routes through mazes of foliage, came to the intersection of some bypaths where stood a rustic building, erected in the beginning for a gardener's lodge and later trans-

formed by a former chatelaine of the villa into an isolated retreat where she could seclude herself with her books and guitar when the exactions of the household became too laborious. It was a desolate-looking place, even though flowering vines completely covered it, for it had about it that subtle atmosphere which seems ever to be the successor of tragic deeds. For the chatelaine's retreat had in time become a rendezvous. There had been stolen meetings and kisses, then a day when there were fierce words, a sword thrust and a scandal. Since then Clematis Cottage had been deserted. The peasants on their way to Casa Tanagra made detours to avoid passing by, and the servants believed it haunted by specters, awaiting victims on whom to wreak their vengeance for the misdeeds that kept them chained to earth. Even Beatrice had been averse to going there to change her clothes for the journey, and had only been made ashamed of her weakness which, to tell the truth, was shared by her companions, by the gentle sarcasm of the Contessa, who did not know the meaning of fear.

The Contessa put her hand in the cluster of vines at the window and drew out the key. The door stuck stiffly and then opened, creaking a protest. A ray of sunlight filtered through the opening and cast a checkered shadow on the dusty floor. A bat winged its way uncertainly toward her, and then, wheeling suddenly, struck the wall with a thud. A yellow butterfly danced in and quickly out again, brushing gently against its waiting mate, as if its tiny soul were oppressed by its moment's journeying into the abyss of gloom. The brocade of the walls was torn and spotted. The pictures were faded. There was a letter on the floor, its torn words yellowed into indecipherable marks. A score of flies were tangled in a spider's noisome web. She shivered slightly, then smiled at her unreasoning dread. She climbed the narrow stairs, peering into the pigeonholes of the desk as she passed. There was nothing to disturb the thick cover of dust, not even a finger mark.

The single piece of furniture in the dismantled room above was a huge, carved armoire. In it had been placed the paraphernalia of departure. There could not have been found a more secure place for the plotting. The conspirators could come and go as they pleased, unmolested by curiosity. The clothes might hang there for months undisturbed if by any chance the departure were delayed, might, indeed, hang there forever, or until they rotted away.

The door of the armoire swung open at her touch. In place of the simple gown worn ordinarily by Beatrice that she expected to find there were the going-away dress, the traveling cloak and hat, designed in their respectable trimness to fit unobtrusively into the frame of a second class *salon* and dining room. There the articles hung, just as they had been placed the day the Contessa and Maria had clandestinely visited the cottage after nightfall and arranged them.

What did it mean? Certainly the directions had been plainly enough understood. Beatrice was to come there at the moment she considered most advisable, change her clothes, and, waiting the favoring moment, escape by a gate in the wall concealed with vines with which the Contessa had made her familiar. A path on the other side led to the main road, where she could soon make her way to the station and after several changes connect with the main line to Naples, a tiresome but inevitable route.

Beatrice had been gone now several hours—in fact, since the afternoon of the preceding day. Her hastily scrawled note to Caterina and Giuseppe's words testified to that. Where had she gone, and how? In the pocket of the gray dress were the *portemonnaie* and the packet of letters.

The first thought that old Giuseppe's threats had at last taken a criminal form was dispelled by the sight of a slip of paper loosely caught about the packet. On it were written a few words, duplicating in appearance those received by Caterina.

I have gone, but in my own way. Forget me and forgive.

Forgive what? Was it merely that she had preferred her own method of departure, afraid at the last moment of the vast ocean and its vaster separations? What would become of her, without money or help?

Was there something more implied in those terse syllables than appeared at first reading? The Contessa could not again so easily dissipate the impression she had received of late from Beatrice's manner that the girl was hiding something, and that that something had nothing to do with old Giuseppe. Thought in vain tried to mosaic these impressions into a perfect design that would furnish an answer to the riddle.

Suddenly the fact of Beatrice's mysterious disappearance was lost sight of as a new idea, overpowering, subversive, took possession of her mind. The well ordered paraphernalia of her mental processes was overturned into a chaotic heap. It was as if a ball of lightning had entered a quiet room, crashing its way and leaving rent particles in its wake. And by this imagined light, she seemed to read a word that covered her horizon:

"Freedom."

Freedom—not for Beatrice but for herself.

She shut and locked the wardrobe door, then walked slowly down the stairs, holding the packet in her hands. She fastened the outside door, replacing the key underneath the leaves. Some orange-bodied wasps threatened the slim fingers disturbing their roof-tree. A humming bird flashed across her path and a spray of clematis caught the lace of her gown.

She did not retrace her steps but made directly for an open space in the center of which was a giant beech, its trunk encircled by a narrow bench. On this she seated herself. The color flamed in her cheeks. Her breath came in audible gasps.

Freedom! Freedom!

### III

THE keystone of an arch may be of alien material to the structure, yet it is

by that the arch is completed and made to stand firm. Insignificant in seeming, it is significant by virtue of the law of correlation.

So, in order to understand the exclamation of Contessa Eleanora Alberghati, it is necessary to understand a certain experience in her past life, simple in itself but having an immense influence on subsequent events.

Five years before, the loungers about a quiet English station in Surrey had the unexpected pleasure one lovely spring morning of seeing the daughters of the Honorable Reginald Wilson, a country gentleman, drive up in a smart trap and alight just as the down train from London came thundering in, starting the rooks in the nearby cathedral to cawing valorously.

Lily, Beth and Sue were there to meet their father, who had gone to the city on one of his infrequent trips; and their interest in his return, beside the trivial one of possible presents and possible news, was augmented by the fact that he was to bring with him their Italian cousin, Eleanora, about whom the girl-fish fancies of many years had gently hovered.

Mrs. Wilson, the mother of the three charming girls, was the daughter of an Americanized banker, born and educated in Italy, who had left his country because it seemed to him, in his youth and inexperience, that its opportunities were too few and its miseries too great; added to this, his political affiliations made his stay there discordant if not actually dangerous.

He never returned to his native land, but sent his daughter, Eleanora, by an American wife, for a long visit to the home of his cousin, the Marchesa di Vambrino, noted for her beauty, wealth and culture, who had, beside these gifts, an affectionate heart. She had always held her absent relative in warm regard and insisted upon his daughter sharing the opportunities of her own child, a girl nearly the same age. Here Eleanora completed her education according to the strict conventionalities of the Italian household, but brought to its subtle rigors and austerities a fund of

irrepressible humor, a naïve point of view which led her into many mishaps, always graciously excused on account of her American birth and bringing up. She had the youthful quality of attaching herself to some special idol, in this case her cousin, Lily.

The recklessness of her American relative, always regulated by innate good taste, her joy in living, her temperamental charm made a great impression on the Italian girl, rather inclined to melancholy and submissive to the weight of traditional precedents, both in thought and action. She had not the power of easy idolatry, but her affection once engaged was steadfast. She recalled Eleanora constantly to her thoughts, after the latter's return to her New York home, and when time and circumstance had completed their inevitable work of separation, noted with sadness the many promises made and broken.

One, however, remained insistent, and in her last moments she exacted from her mother a promise that the little girl, born after the death of her father, then but a few weeks old, should be sent to England, after the convent schooling, to the household of her cousin Eleanora, now the wife of an Englishman whom she had met and captivated as she was riding a vicious bronco across the *mesa* of a Texas ranch. She recalled the happy days they had spent and the mutual benefit they had been to each other. She desired for her daughter the experience of transplanting, and believed that this heritage would be of inestimable value, more even than the material ones of wealth and social prestige. She dreamed of "those other heights in other lives," a wider horizon of experience and thought than she had been able to enjoy. Conventions on the death bed seemed as futile as the bag of gold.

The promise exacted became one of the established formulas of the household, its fulfillment a point of honor with the Marchesa di Vambrino, whose advancing age and rapidly increasing weaknesses made no appreciable difference in the solicitude she displayed to-

ward her orphaned granddaughter. The English household, rapidly increasing in membership, accepted the coming of the Italian cousin as a certainty, their interest in its consummation, begun by nursery tales of the wonders and beauties of the foreign land, augmented with growth and finally bourgeoned into a perfect vintage of correspondence, where badly spelled and badly phrased letters in French, Italian and English flourished vividly. Quotations from these letters furnished household jests for years, and the joking, which the Italian cousin scarcely understood but certainly liked, did more than anything else could possibly do to convince her of the fundamental power of kinship. Now, after a decade and more of the wonder and waiting, the quartette were to meet, their coming together a natural result of preceding events.

"There she is," exclaimed Beth, as a stalwart Scotch damsel wrapped in a big plaid alighted from a third class compartment. Sue had already disappeared in chase of an elderly female with smoked glasses and a net bag, through whose meshes packages protruded until its contours resembled a prizefighter's arm or a child's Christmas stocking. Lily, standing a little apart, as befitted her dignity of elder sister, noted a pretty, dark-eyed, slimly formed girl looking shyly from a nearby door. Their eyes met and Lily nodded a welcome, which was soon followed by the enthusiastic outbursts of her sisters, to which Mr. Wilson was an amused and interested auditor. In the short trip from London he had become very much interested, even fond of the girl who was to be for a long time a member of his family. He was captivated by her beauty, so different from the English type, charmed by her perfect good breeding and cultivation, and touched by a certain clinging trustfulness, very pleasing to his masculine sense.

This was Eleanora's introduction, supplemented after a delightful drive through Surrey lanes by a cordial welcome from the aunt, whose name she bore.

In the English home, where comfort

and luxury form the perfect balance, found nowhere else in the world so completely, Eleanora soon was perfectly at ease, in no sense an alien, but a unit in a whole, without either opportunity or desire to be homesick for Southern skies.

Maturing more rapidly by the mysterious tropic law than her Anglo-Saxon cousins, Eleanora had really little but sentiment in accord with the girls, with the exception of the sedate Lily, her senior by a few years of time and many in thought and judgment. Their companionship had many chasms of conflict and many ties of reciprocity.

Eleanora became conversant with the system of a well organized home, an accomplishment of rare value to her later on, when she grafted the details of economy learned there to the more careless *ménage* of an Italian household. Of the English language and literature she had been for years a conscientious student. In both she became more conversant. Her speech was soon almost devoid of accent, and her knowledge of books would have put many an English girl to shame. She adopted without question the rules of ethical conduct which prevailed in her adopted home, the unwritten standards by which others were judged. In her grandmother's household and in the convent, good taste rather than a deep religious feeling had been considered a sufficient guide.

Beautiful in a youthful way when she first came, she soon changed into a lovely young woman, of medium height, with great lustrous eyes and quantities of blue-black hair. Her manner of perfect ease and *savoir faire* gave the looker-on the impression that she was perhaps too sophisticated, while she was, in reality, as inexperienced in matters of wordly lore as any of the trio of cousins. She had come to them at an impressionable age, the one her mother had silently noted in her own life as being avid of experience, and while her religion was never interfered with, its lacks were supplemented by spiritual suggestions which she was quick to absorb. Sincerity, the rights of others, the love of home and kindred—never narrowed to the forgetfulness of the demands of humanity—

were items in the creed of the English home, and she grew mentally and morally along the lines of least resistance.

In the last year of her stay she and her cousin Lily were taken to London for the season. It was understood by her aunt that she was not to be allowed any masculine attention as the result of this debut that might interfere with plans already formed by suggesting an alien marriage. She was in consequence carefully guarded in this respect, an espionage which did not interfere with her enjoyment.

There was much gaiety compressed into a few months, and Lily's engagement to the oldest son of a neighboring Surrey squire, returned after the conventional European touring, followed in due course. She announced it to Eleanora first, coming into her room late one night, embracing her with unusual abandon and kissing her on both cheeks, a custom adopted from the Italian girl.

"I hope, Eleanora dear," she whispered shyly, "you will some time be as fortunate, and that 'some time' will be soon."

For the first time, the desultory interest Eleanora had shown to the subjects of marriage and an establishment was quickened into a livelier feeling, watching her cousin's happiness. She recalled the events of her own betrothal, arranged according to Italian custom, more vividly than she had done before, and visualized the features of her fiancé, Conte Albergati, with an almost painful exercise of memory.

She described him in one of these moods to Lily, who had often asked for information and been laughingly refused, as the exaction of memory was too great and interest too slight.

"He seemed to me, Lily," she confessed, "very old, very bored and overpoweringly chivalrous. He quite stunned me. I was fifteen then and he thirty; now that I am twenty, somehow thirty-five does not seem so frightfully aged."

Lily nodded understandingly. They were in the garden of the London house at the time, and before the conversation was concluded she was called to receive her expectant lover. Left alone, Eleanora

sat and pondered deeply on the subject of her own marriage, which would in all probability be celebrated soon after her return. How would she consider Conte Albergati now, in the light of her womanhood and experience, replacing the scanty vision of youth? Was his tired look the result of a reserve of sentiment, the evidence of a soul too finely attuned to be pleased with the inanities of a social life which even her short experience in London had taught her might easily prove dissatisfying to anyone looking beneath the surface of things? The recollection of his physical appearance, the racial type of Italian nobility, pleased her esthetic sense, and his manner, as she recalled it, was a pleasing contrast to that of the Englishmen she had met, who had seemed to her rather lacking in ardor and a little careless in their treatment of their womankind—always excepting her Uncle Reginald, whose devotion to his wife, after a marriage of twenty-five years, was one of the most gracious memories she took back to her Italian home.

The return of the Wilson family to Surrey was emphasized by a dinner party and dance given to announce the engagement to the neighborhood. The seating at the table was most informal, and Lily's fiancé had at his left hand her prettiest and most attractive bridesmaid, a girl who had had both a childish and youthful love affair with him, broken off by their respective absences at school and in travel, but which formed a bantering subject for their introductory talk. Man of the world and connoisseur of female loveliness as he considered himself, Basil Gilmore had the fault of the amateur: he was easily bewitched—in this case by a coquetry lavished generously because its possessor desired to keep herself in practice and because she was bored by the elderly beau on her other side. Her words were as discreet as her glances were provocative, and soon everyone at the table was cognizant of the flirtation.

Lily bore herself bravely, taking no notice of her fiancé's distraction, smiling and speaking to him naturally when occasionally he remembered, turned in



her direction and addressed a hurried phrase.

The dance commenced and ended early. Lily was the perfect hostess, seeing that the most unattractive girls had attractive partners and apparently not noticing that the first and last dances she gave Basil Gilmore were separated by a half-dozen and more with Edith Wayland, who found his step as much in accord with her own as she had found his bantering and complimentary speech to her mental satisfaction.

Late that night, Eleanora knocked at Lily's door for the usual kimono talk. She found her sitting at her desk with dark circles under her eyes and a weary look to the pale face. She was writing, and her fingers trembled across some closely penned sheets. There was silence for a moment. The air was tense. Finally the letter was signed and sealed. Then Lily came and sat on the edge of the bed, passing her arm about Eleanora's shoulder and resting her cheek against hers. There was a flush in her face and her voice shook.

"I have broken my engagement, Eleanora," she said at last with faltering syllables.

Eleanora was silent. She could find no words to meet the first chaotic situation she had encountered in this serene household.

Lily answered the unspoken interrogation.

"The man is a cad at heart, and fortunately I found it out in time."

"What is a 'cad'—exactly?" asked Eleanora. The word was new to her.

"A cad," said Lily slowly, her head raised proudly, "is a term we do not have to use frequently. It is an elastic word. It might mean a man who had won a woman's love by specious lies. It might mean a man who cheated at cards. In this case it means a man who thinks more of the temporary appeal to his vanity than he does of the feeling of the woman whom he pretends to respect and love, a man who would sacrifice a life's ideal for the sake of listening to flattering platitudes from a person he does not care for and whom he will forget in a day's time."

The action of Lily was that of a young woman unwilling to compromise with life. It had little to do with that of a woman of sophistication who often gives much, hoping she may gain more thereby. Lily had a clairvoyant perception of the fundamental meaning of love which only the pure in heart can know.

Eleanora was utterly unable to cope with a situation so unexpected, so subversive. She tried once or twice, then stopped. She seemed to suffer from a spiritual vertigo. Lily's requirements in marriage she believed until now to be like her own, and those stopped short at the edge of the depths. To have for lover and husband a young and handsome man, popular with his kind, seemed all sufficient. She had assumed that a man who answered these demands would answer all others. After Lily had fallen asleep she crept to her room, feeling as if her whole life had been temporarily uprooted.

The next day, when the bomb of Lily's decision exploded in the family circle, there was much the same sentiment of futility and shock. Her excuse for not appearing at breakfast on account of a headache was accepted without suspicion by her fiancé, who departed after penning a note of sympathy, hurrying to London on the one up train of the morning, in order to hear a Parliamentary debate on Colonial possessions, in which he was interested. Edith Wayland rode over to the Wilson house, looking bewitching in a new riding habit, but Gilmore was too occupied to continue the airy persiflage of the evening before and contented himself with a mere interchange of greetings.

The letter of dismissal went up to town in the train with him, and was delivered that afternoon at his chambers, where he went to dress for dinner. Urgent matters kept him in London for a few days, but he wrote, first in bewilderment, then in anger, then in deep contrition. As much as it was in his self-centered nature to love, he loved Lily. She was in all respects the woman he had dreamed of as a fitting companion for the future his ambition painted; her social standing, her beauty, her accom-

plishments, her delicacy and grace were beyond the attacks of the most carping critic. He had weighed everything cautiously in the balance before he had asked her to marry him in a manner which, to a keener observer than she, might have implied a knowledge that while she had much to give he was by no means to be despised as a *parti*. What he did not confess was the fact that his egotism desired the balance that nature is ever demanding by attaching itself to her splendid sincerity and wholesome creeds.

Lily read contemptuously the statement that he never cared to see again the girl who had caused the break in their relationship. "She was," he wrote, "merely that temporary attraction which fills in a man's idle hours." When, in a subsequent letter, he used the word "jealousy," her contempt changed to rage. It was an anger safer than indifference, for it carried her farther along and left her spiritually more appeased than indifference could have accomplished in twice the time. In one of the many conversations she had with Eleanora, she said:

"He misunderstood and would always misunderstand. I would become a wife to whom a recreant husband returns with sneers and criticisms directed against the women who have detained him until satiety ensues." She pictured in glowing terms the middle age and down grade of years when, instead of the harvest of hours made golden by mutual respect and understanding, which often keep together man and woman so closely that death itself is powerless to separate them, they would be bound together by habit and nothing else, she an old woman tied to an antiquated beau, always flirting with the latest *débutante*, who pitied her and laughed at him behind his back. She had seen this type of married couple too often, for no social circle is freed from its intrusion, and she did not relish the possibility of an active participation which her imagination painted.

Lily read all the correspondence to her family. She was eager for their approval, and after the first shock of disappointment, the natural shrinking from pub-

licity, they gave it unqualifiedly. Her mother summed up the situation in a final phrase:

"A man like him, if he marries at all, should marry a woman like himself, insensible to delicate impressions, who could neither hurt nor be hurt by words and actions which to the finer-grained have in them an infinity of delight or disaster."

Lily's first season, commenced so brilliantly, had ended in a fiasco, but no intimation was ever given in the loving family circle that it was so considered by them. On the contrary, all showed that they felt she had by her prudence escaped a great danger and she was treated like a heroine, praise rather than rebuke her portion. It was not the conventional point of view of a father and mother not too heavily endowed with the world's goods and a trio of marriageable daughters on their hands, but it was one quite in keeping with the traditions of the Wilson home.

This incident crystallized all the experiences Eleanora had gathered during her visit, and excuses the space it occupied in her thoughts at the time and in after hours. It was a memory impossible to forget, one to which she reverted again and again, that seemed to establish for her a road of conduct when tradition and heredity warred against the claims of honor and decency.

Lily's succeeding conduct came in for an equal share of her cousin's approval. She was no broken-hearted girl, crying out with futile wailings against the disappointments of life. Those near her noted a slight shade of added seriousness in her manner—that was all. She entered heartily into the gaieties of the neighborhood. She even welcomed Edith Wayland with the rest of the young women to her entertainments, saying to Eleanora's remonstrance: "My dear, she was not to blame. If it had not been Edith, it would have been someone else—he is that kind." The few gifts, the engagement ring and letters were returned to her former sweetheart, and soon he was completely forgotten, not a scar remaining on the surface of her tranquil soul.

Eleanora became Contessa Albergati immediately after her return to Italy. Her childish criticism of her betrothed she discovered sadly at fault, her imaginative reading in the garden of the London house more nearly correct. His tired manner appeared to her the repose of a man who has seen much, suffered much, seeking in true love the oasis amid a desert of shifting memories and experiences. His attitude certainly excused this reading. He erred, if at all, on the side of over-scrupulousness, a fault she found easy to forgive. He studied her tastes with the minutest care. He made no exactions. He was generous to a fault. He showed to the world that his ardor was as great as if the marriage had been arranged with love as its only factor.

Lily's unhappy experience returned to her memory several times and she compared her own good fortune with it, with a half-apologetic sigh. Once she put the Count to a test similar to the one on which Basil Gilmore had shipwrecked his hopes. She maneuvered to bring him in company with the most beautiful and charming woman of her acquaintance at a house party of the Marchesa di Vambrino's arranged by her. The design was frustrated by the indifference of the Count to every other woman present except herself. Once she even begged him to leave her and escort the guest named for a walk on the terrace. His low-toned refusal brought to her cheeks the quick blush of an embarrassed youth, accustomed to the milder-worded compliments of Anglo-Saxon usage. This was the last suspicion she entertained of his sincerity; thereafter she dreamed—the dream of a young girl.

Three weeks after the marriage ceremony she came hurriedly into their sitting room. It was near the dinner hour, and she had been separated from her husband for thirty minutes. She wanted to see him alone, for there had been merry-making all day and there were guests to dinner. She greeted him jestingly, as if they had been separated for a year.

He was standing at the door of his dressing room reading a telegram.

He looked up with a smile, half gentle, half apologetic. Crumpling the paper in his hands, he came forward hurriedly, in a loverlike abandon of his ordinarily lethargic step. He kissed her on her brow, on her cheek, on her pouting lips.

"*Carissima*," he murmured, tenderly, "I have had news for us—both."

She grasped him tightly, her face white, her eyes startled. "There can be no bad news," she said at length, "when we have each other."

He drew her closer to him, and over her shoulder a yawn for a second disfigured the classic calm of his face and stopped the coming speech.

"That is true, dear, but it is nevertheless bad news, for it means that I must go to Rome in the morning on business—urgent business that must not be delayed. You trust me?"

Trust him? What a strange choice of words! Of course she trusted him.

It was not until a long time after that she discovered he had left her, during their honeymoon, at the urgent demand of Signora Campus, a friend of many years' standing and the beauty of the house party whom he had ignored. His devotion to the Signora, with the natural lapses his temperament demanded, had been of so long a duration that the society which looked on and laughed at the pretense of ardor shown his young fiancée accorded it that prestige of respectability which time lends even to the most irregular relationship.

A long course of deceit, the Count argued, though quite possible with his training, was intolerably wearing to the nerves. It did not outlast the first month of married life. A certain piquancy of mind and manner, due to the English training of his betrothed, had captivated for a while his superficial interest. In the routine of daily life he discovered the young wife not essentially different from the average young girl, lacking the experience in playing with a man of his type and keeping him eternally guessing as to her next move in the game of dalliance. Satiety naturally ensued.

He had been a roué at twenty, and at thirty-five he had not left one emotion

of honor, decency or respect. In place of ethics he had manners, and his code embraced a working knowledge of the so-called gentleman. He would not have cheated at cards, for he feared social ostracism and realized how easily the gamester comes to overrate his own cleverness. He would lie to a man but only when he could gain some material advantage, or could do it, theatrically, to preserve what he was pleased to call "a woman's honor." He lied to women always, by habit, creed and indifference.

If Eleanora had married, as most of her classmates did, immediately on leaving the convent, she would have accepted marriage as they did—as something necessarily imperfect but the best solution offered of social problems. She would have understood that her lot was no different from that of the average woman of her class in society.

But the years in the English household prevented her acceptance of such specious reasoning. With the hot, emotional blood of the South, she combined the conscience and logical faculties of the North. The call for happiness beat insistently in heart and brain, but she would not accept a mean compromise.

She had loved and been deceived. The natural desires of youth could not all at once be denied. They fought like tigers with her wounded pride, her hatred of noisome bypaths, her love of the right. She would not stoop to retaliation, though opportunity was offered. She could not learn the lesson of many women, to love without respect.

She thought often of a retreat to the Surrey home, but Lily was now in a household of her own, married to a man of worth if not spectacular promise; and the younger girls were preparing for dual nuptials. Over all the household brooded the spirit of peace and content. What right had she to take her unhappiness into that serene atmosphere? Her church would not grant her divorce. Her rank demanded silence.

In the early days of her awakening there were fierce spasms of jealousy, recriminations and despair, met by silence or the statement that her husband was

like other men and that she must bow gracefully to the inevitable.

Fortunately the Count left her much to herself. The exactions of his world were many, and when they did meet her manner was not one to tempt him to overmuch dalliance at her side. She was not a good actress; that accomplishment comes slowly and with infinite pains. Life is a willing teacher but it exacts a full tuition. In their rare *lête-à-lêtes* the Count retailed unsavory scandals, tearing from her every illusion regarding the lives of the people among whom her lot was cast. There was, finally, no man in her acquaintance left brave or woman pure. True or false, the stories left such unpleasant impressions that companionship with the crowd of pleasure seekers seemed impossible. Soon she walked alone.

One day she faced him. There was no theatrical outburst, only a frigid statement of fact. Its truth was compelling.

"You must find some place for me away from this life or I will kill myself. I will go where you please, but go I must."

He was more than willing; even the exigencies of keeping up appearances before the servants were beginning to pall. Her quiet intense moods, the contempt bitterly evident in her rare speech, her shrinking when he passed as if a leper were near, began to get on his nerves. Yet he felt that the noise of her revolver shot would be an intolerable breach of etiquette.

"How would Casa Tanagra suit you?" he inquired. A description of its merits proved satisfying. It was near their Florentine home, and they could exchange visits to and fro to silence gossip. She might give out that she was ill and needed the country air; he would not contradict any statement that did not infringe on conventions.

It was at Casa Tanagra that she found health, in the gardens, in the olive groves, in the lace school she soon established. She was too young and vital for her experiences to have left her spirit entirely moribund, and sorrow brought in its train a sympathetic understanding of the lives of others.

In the society the Count frequented it was rumored that the Contessa had been secluded on account of his jealousy. Others claimed that she was a *religieuse* and had withdrawn voluntarily from gaiety. The Count favored this latter supposition. His vanity was hurt by the idea that he could be jealous of any woman, least of all his wife. When he came to Casa Tanagra after a more than usually serious debauch, they breakfasted together on the terrace when the weather permitted. They drove through the village streets or walked in view of people. Their talk was monosyllabic except when it related to her philanthropic scheme, which he approved and financed generously. He gave her but small sums of ready money, and desired to show in this way that he was a generous if a severe master. Her housekeeping met his fastidious approval, and at every visit he congratulated himself on the ease with which their marital difficulties had been adjusted.

#### IV

##### FREEDOM!

Deep in her mind had been the knowledge that some day she would find it. The very vitality of the thought would, to the psychic, have argued the result. If she had ever allowed herself to become a drifter on a sea of unfulfilled intentions, her moral and physical fiber would have given way. If she had been content with the might-have-been, she in time would have been forced to accept things as they were; but her health was too strong, her line of vision too true, so that she was prepared to act quickly and surely when the moment came.

And it had come. She was sure of that.

It spoke to her from the hanging clothes, from the indefinable atmosphere which had formed about these externals of departure. It spoke to her in the stealthy journeys of the spiders, in the buzzing of the flies, in the vista of white road which she saw through an opening in the ilex avenue, leading into interminable distances.

Yes, the hour had certainly struck and it would never strike again.

She retraced, step by step, the methods by which fate had at last played into her hand. She had been working in Beatrice's behalf. She had thought only of her safety and well being. She had planned all the details of the flight, purchasing, fitting out, arranging for her arrival in the New World; and all the time she unconsciously had been preparing for her own future.

It had frequently happened during her life at Casa Tanagra that she had been obliged to join the Count to fulfill the obligations of some social responsibility which could not, by virtue of her rank, be denied. These absences often kept her away for weeks, and her abrupt departures and unannounced returns were not questioned by any curiosity. It might be that a fortnight would elapse before her flight was discovered. By that time Beatrice's going would have become an old story, and the village and tenants of Casa Tanagra, fully cognizant of the reason therefor, would scarcely connect her departure with it. While the ocean was day by day separating her from the old existence, her husband would believe her occupied with the routine of her placid life in the country mansion; the household would picture her fulfilling the duties of her position by the side of a devoted husband.

His reading of the mystery would, of course, follow the natural trend of his thought. He would evoke a lover from the charnal house of his mind immediately. She visioned him asking indirect questions in regard to her habits, her absences, her letters, her evenings freed from all scrutiny and passed—how? He would practise rapier thrusts of inquiry while seeming to use the broadsword.

She read further. His search abortive, he would speak of her with the highest respect, the sentiment due his name and rank. So long as others did not seek to tarnish her good name, he would not be the first to suggest an unwholesome solution to the puzzle. The report that she was indeed a *religieuse* would be subtly suggested—who could tell when and



where?—and soon afterward she would, by the same circuitous form of address, be immured in some conventual retreat forever. Her mode of life of late would aid this explanation.

The letter she would write him, a simple word of farewell, would be the ultimate note in a frightful composition of discords. It was for him to act upon it, save his name from all stain except that of his own belief, and his vanity at the same time from all but the disturbance of his hidden emotions.

She could see him pale, emaciated, listless, after some debauch the idol of a boudoir circle, sighing like a furnace for the wife who had sacrificed her marital vows to heaven. Her lips curled, so realistic was the scene.

Then—what matter what he did? To follow the possible wanderings of a man whose selfish impulses were his only guide to conduct was nerve destroying and time wasting.

She was sure, however, of two things, his secrecy and his hatred; no, of another—his revenge. She lived in the twentieth century, it is true, but the Italian spirit laughs at modernity. His revenge. She studied the subject carefully. Could she escape it? It would need great precaution and great courage. She could exercise both when need be.

Over and over, during the hasty moments of her preparations, she said to herself:

"I have gone as far as I can go. I have reached the *impasse* that comes in every life. I can remain, it is true; I can stagnate. I can grow old without life, ambition or love. I can, to avoid satiety, go back to the world in which he lives and become like the rest of his kind, or I can act as a constant irritant to them, hating my assumed airs of superiority as they would have a right to term my inability to become like them.

To stay—she shuddered at the thought. To go, she saw before her sacrifice, work, disappointment, hardship and, lastly, loneliness. The rest would be new to her, but loneliness—no. She had known nothing else. She saw, too, a questing soul and an uplift of the spirit so long downtrodden.

Clotilde, her special maid, who sometimes accompanied her on the infrequent trips, was extremely good-natured, with a flow of Italian superlatives on her ready tongue to prove her devotion; but the Contessa knew that she could not trust her, and extra vigilance would be required to escape her lynx-eyed scrutiny. While she was expressing her faithfulness in words, she was taking the first opportunity offered to inform Carlo, the Count's valet, of the minutest details of the humdrum life at Casa Tanagra.

But the Contessa had accustomed Clotilde to the independent ways learned in the English household, and as the latter's duties were made so much lighter by this peculiarity she was never insistent on her rights of service, while deprecating by slight shades of manner and speech the lack of that aristocratic languor she had learned to associate as the prerogative of ladies of rank. She had a certain shrug of the shoulders when she sauntered into the housekeeper's room, saying in explanation: "Madame has another caprice of energy;" then she would idle through the hours while the Contessa was waiting on herself in her bath, coiffuring her wonderful profusion of hair, which she arranged simply and disliked to have touched by strange fingers.

When Clotilde saw the small trunk partially packed for the unexpected journey she was not surprised. She was a trifle irritated that she was to be left behind, but this had occurred before, and though the Count had been annoyed at the *bourgeois* sort of arrival, he had been obliged to accept the Contessa's declaration that she disapproved of Clotilde's flirtation with Carlo, a married man and father of a large family, and would do nothing to further it. Well, there were others beside Carlo, and the Contessa's absence would give them the attention they demanded. Besides, she was a trifle vexed with Carlo of late. There had been no little presents from the city, and she decided that she would not write to him—well, not until he had repented.

So she inquired amicably of the Con-

tessa, having learned her ultimatum: "The blue and silver gown, madame?"

The Contessa nodded. "Don't disturb the things underneath. I have nearly finished putting in the few articles I need."

Clotilde did not dare lift even a corner of the tissue paper for the Contessa's eyes were upon her. While she was picturing her mistress arrayed in the dream of chiffon and lace, the Contessa was equally busy planning how to dispose of this unnecessary equipment, with which it was obligatory for her to start in order not to arouse a servant's suspicions.

As she watched Clotilde bending over the trunk, an open dressing case in her hand, with its cut glass bottles and *repoussé* brushes, she had a momentary reaction of purely feminine dread. All the thousand and one appliances of luxury, which she had taken as a matter of course—how was she to get along without them? She realized for the moment the seamy side of her contemplated action.

It is true that she had learned to help herself in many ways that women of her rank considered impossible, and habit had created a preference for this independence; yet she knew there was always someone to be depended on in moments of fatigue or haste. It is true she had taken the accessories of beautiful clothes and well ordered establishment as a matter of course, but their absence might not be so easy to endure.

With superhuman effort she stopped this weakening line of thought. She gave Clotilde some formal directions and spent the last moments of her stay with the housekeeper, explaining that her orders might cover an absence of some weeks. Her words in this direction were superfluous; the *ménage* of Casa Tanagra ran on oiled wheels and her absence would not effect its perfection.

Her lace school? She gave a sigh. That, too, was well organized. Already there had been some talk of combining it with a neighboring class, sharing responsibility and profits; and no doubt in the near future this union would be accomplished. There was no cause for worry. It had passed the years of

childish diseases, was full grown and healthy. She might feel the regret a mother has in sending her sturdy offspring into the care of others, but there was no occasion to dread any disastrous consequences.

When the sound of the carriage wheels was lost in the distance, Clotilde and the housekeeper, who had attended the Contessa to the door and were eternally at variance, stopped for a moment.

"I never knew the Contessa to be so excited about going away," said the maid finally. "How she loves and sighs for him! She is so quiet, so unhappy when they are apart. She has probably been longing for a touch of his hands while she walked so continuously up and down. She didn't even look at the new blue and silver costume when I packed it."

"Hussy!" said the housekeeper. "What do you know about the touch of hands? Go to your idling. You'll do enough of it while your mistress is away. Leave love to your betters."

So short a time had elapsed since the finding of the clothes in Clematis Cottage and her sudden decision, that as the Contessa was rolled rapidly toward the railroad station she could hardly believe that she was not in some strange dream, from which she would presently wake. She felt stealthily in her handbag for the note of farewell to her husband, the *portemonnaie* and packet of letters intended for Beatrice, as if to assure herself by external evidences of the reality of events. Beside the small sum of money therein contained, there was only the trifling addition she had been able to save from time to time, never sufficient in itself to have permitted the thought of escape, with a few jewels received from the Marchesa on her wedding day. These she would only sell in some dire strait. The Marchesa was now in her second childhood, but a certain penuriousness of habit which she had successfully fought during her years in the world had now taken possession of her completely. Until her death the Contessa would have neither money, lands nor other appurtenances, and her continued health caused the Count no little anxiety.

As the Contessa fingered the petty sum of money and the cluster of precious stones, she wondered, following the Italian law, what would become of her heritage? Would the Count have it? The Church? The last report from the physician had been that the Marchesa, in her present state of health, might live ten years. "A decade—a lifetime," the Count had phrased it.

The following events, the railway ride, the night in the small retired hotel, the continuation of the journey the next day, the purchases in the shops, the packing of the box with the articles unneeded by her any longer "to be left until called for," the embarkation in the late afternoon, all the trivialities attending thereon, seemed to pass like the pictures in a panorama, where she was a spectator rather than an active participant.

As she tossed sick and helpless in her narrow cabin, she visioned the familiar room in which she had spent so many unhappy hours at Casa Tanagra, the massive furnishings of Italian walnut, exquisitely carved by master hands, the wonderful hangings, the *prie-dieu*, the marriage chest, the guitar and organ, the copies of Guido's "Cenci," and Carpacchio's lute player from "The Presentation in the Temple." The face of the Count peered at her from the shadows of the lost chamber, with its cruel sneering mouth, its lines of sensuality, the voice and eye that could simulate tenderness so well. And, miserable as she was, she thanked God that the new life had commenced.

Beatrice sat in the sitting room of a prettily furnished apartment in the city of Florence. It was a dainty place, such as might have been chosen for the first home of a newly married couple, and bore little resemblance to the plaster cottage of old Giuseppi, whose chief claim to attention was its excessive neatness. Instead of the one room where she and her father had sat, ate, used in short as a general living room, and in which old Giuseppi slept at night, she climbing to the low-ceilinged, half-story above, there was a suite of rooms, filled with delicately painted pieces, bits of bric-à-brac,

with attractive wallpaper to look at in place of the colored chromos pinned on the rough walls, to which she had been accustomed.

And, instead of the outlook on the interminable sea, the groves of olive and lemon trees, the winding path of the hillside with its few passers-by, she had now the sights and sounds of city life, of which it seemed she could never tire, so strange and exciting they were to her country bred experience, the peddlers, the organ grinders, the beautifully gowned women and men, the cunning children who played in the streets and asked money of the passers-by. Notwithstanding the many fears that tugged at her heart, she was happy in her new home.

Up to the time of the domestic tragedy she had been one of the lightest-hearted girls in the village. There was no one so eagerly sought for at picnics and merry-makings, no one who danced and sang so acceptably, no one who had more avowed admirers waiting only the specific choice on her part to crystallize admiration into something more definite than compliments, serenades and *festa* gifts. She had, in a limited range, a rather remarkable gift of improvisation, and when she sang her color came and went, her body swayed with the music, her eyes danced. Lookers-on at the game of youth prophesied that Beatrice would be one of those early married; that her fifteenth birthday would find her a blushing bride.

Sorrow separates as well as develops. In the year after the tragedy Beatrice matured rapidly, and she soon felt herself out of touch with the trivial interests of her companions. Only the serious work of the lace school attracted her, and into that she threw herself with such eagerness, supplementing the tuition at Casa Tanagra with hours of home industry, that she soon became famous for the rapidity of her work and its perfection. She made this work the excuse for staying from the merry-makings, in which she had once participated with such pleasure. The mysterious joy in the mere fact of living which had made these occasions so delightful to her now no longer existed;

neither could she take the old unquestioning delight in the natural loveliness of the country where she lived, the blue canopy of the sky, the immortal green of the trees, the pink and white hedges, the turquoise of the sea, the far-off luminous peaks. The riot of color which had formerly set the pulses in the young body aglow now left her quite unmoved.

Once or twice it had occurred to her that she would go to the Contessa, the happy Contessa as she called her in her thoughts, young, beautiful, rich, with a handsome husband and hosts of friends, coming to the country when tired of city gaieties, returning when the country palled. Then came the thought of the little mind unable to see beyond the surface of things. What could the Contessa, so far above her, know of the loneliness of heart, the crying out of a poor wounded spirit, whose utterances were so inarticulate, even to herself?

Brooding over the differences in their positions, she could not help but exaggerate, and found herself at last unable to make the attempt to bridge them by her self-conscious, unready avowals. Her life was thrown back on itself. She had no one to whom she might turn for consolation and understanding.

One night she walked slowly along a path which led up, up to a height from which she could look down on the village far below. She halted for a moment in front of the shrine and murmured the shibboleth of a daily prayer. She rose from her knees with a gesture of protest.

"Prayer and patience," she said, half aloud. That's what the Padre preaches, and it's all right for the children and the old people; but what does it do for the young? By the time one has become patient and resigned, the grave yawns. Prayer and patience. He makes his living preaching it but does God ever hear? And if He does, why does He not answer—sometimes?"

She crossed herself at the blasphemy and flung herself on the flower-strewn turf.

She heard a footfall and a soft touch on her arm. She blushed furiously, and attempted to rise without looking around.

"So you came," whispered the Count

caressingly. The long mustache nearly touched her cheek. "I was afraid that Giuseppe—"

The allusion was adroit.

She shivered at the thought of the homegoing. Surely these few moments on the hilltop could do no harm.

"He went out early with the nets," she said at length.

"It would be a good thing if he never returned," said her companion, with an artificial intensity.

Beatrice did not answer this. She could not bring her lips to utter what was in her mind.

The place of the rendezvous was well chosen. There was but little possibility of a rencounter, and if a neighbor did approach what more natural than that Beatrice, seemingly unconscious of the Count's strolling by, should be kneeling at the wayside shrine—Beatrice, the unhappy, who had found the roof of the church too near for the outpourings of her wounded heart? Such a neighbor would have duplicated her prayer silently and passed on without a disturbing word.

At each of the Count's recent visits to Casa Tanagra he had managed to meet Beatrice. At first an accidental encounter had opened his eyes to a certain indefinable grace which to his hypercritical eyes the more robust country women lacked. His interest in the Contessa's philanthropic scheme and his consequent attendance at the lace school emphasized this attraction. Nowhere was Beatrice seen to better advantage than bending over her wooden frame, her light, supple fingers weaving the shuttles to and fro.

The accidental meetings, the rendezvous where no step forward was made, the tax on time and patience which irritated the Count's disposition, he determined at length must have the fruition he had planned, and so his ardor increased to the point where Beatrice was troubled. She did not dare question. She was too deeply entangled to withdraw.

Until now the Count had made her believe he was merely a friend, his interest that of sympathy for her lonely

lot. His demand for secrecy, he explained was due to the Contessa's pride.

This time he boldly outlined a plan he had made for her safety, for she had confessed the neighborhood's scheme for her departure and her own dread of its consummation. The thought of the great ocean she had to cross, the new, strange life under an alien sky, had terrified her so that at night she would lie awake for hours with clenched hands, fearing to cry out on account of the curses that would come from old Giuseppe, robbed of his sleep.

"Beatrice, *carissima*," he murmured, gazing at the slim, lissome figure and at the pretty face from which the expression of moroseness had temporarily disappeared, witness of his charm, "you say that you must go away. Well, go, but go—with me.

"The preparations are all made. Write your friends that you have gone, but in your own way. They will never suspect. Otherwise they might send to America and find out the truth. I will care for you as a brother, an elder brother. You shall be safe and happy with me—I promise."

Beatrice clasped her hands about her knees and rested her face on them.

America, hard work, dreary days among strangers! Little as life offered her, it was better than that blurred picture.

She was not ignorant of the precipice on which she stood; the secret rendezvous, the constant invocation to silence meant something more than his asseverations of the Contessa's unceasing jealousy could explain. Like her sisters from time immemorial, she wondered if it were possible for her to stand firmly where others had slipped. He had sworn to her again and again that he needed her sympathy as much as she needed his; that she could help him as a sister to make his life better; and by saving her from sorrowful days and desolating experiences—sickness, perhaps death in a foreign land—he assumed a responsibility he could never forget nor neglect.

It is easy to convince when one is convinced oneself. For the moment the Count believed in his own mood. He

was tired of the amours he called friendships so as not to offend delicate ears. He was tired of the exactions of the women he had known. He had a restful dream that obsessed his mind, coming like a breath of country air into the fever of his ill spent days. It was a dream of a little home quite unknown to the world, where a pretty *contadina* would welcome him when he came, ask no questions when he went, serve, flatter, caress and—trust him. No one had ever done that.

It is true that Beatrice had little education, but he was weary of the finesse of the over-civilized. He was tired, deadly tired, of clever women who kept one's mind on the rack. He was tired of the caprices of fashionable beauties and celebrated actresses, tired of the intrigues necessary when one made love to the wives of one's friends.

Moved by his own belief, he pleaded desperately. He threw all the fervor of which he was capable into his speech. Would she come? He repeated over and over again his promises.

Together they watched the sunset die and felt the chill of the twilight penetrate the atmosphere. Then they said *au revoir*.

Beatrice returned to her home and old Giuseppe fell upon her with curses. She was a fool, changeling, a leper. She was no child of his.

She listened, as usual, without response. She took blows and words without protest. They would soon be over now. In a week she left the shelter of her father's roof.

## V

How light her heart was and how light her feet! It seemed to the Contessa Eleanora, as she walked along the pavement of the strange city, as if she were on wings. The ocean she had just crossed had done more than separate her from the country of her birth and give her new surroundings. It had caused all her former existence to recede like a dream from which she had at last awakened.



She had adapted herself with great readiness to her new surroundings, the clean little room on the south side of Washington Square, in a house kept by an Italian woman, found after a day's wandering. It contained a cot bed and a dresser, whose cracked mirror reflected a face with strange contortions at which she always had to laugh. There were some cheap pictures hung on nails in the wall, and everywhere the evidences of soap, water and poverty.

When she came out in the morning there was the little old woman with the bent back and the withered face to say, "*Buon giorno, signorina.*" There was the welcoming kitchen, where, as favored lodger, she was allowed to get her one meal a day, that the landlady, it must be confessed, usually cooked for her. She discovered several inexpensive eating places outside, where she went for the remainder of her meals, some of them none too savory and inviting, if the truth were told. But what did she care? It seemed to her like one great *festa*, a masquerade of the moment.

She had been in the New World a week, and had gradually accustomed herself to her surroundings. She crossed the square and sat on a bench near a spasmodic fountain. She rehearsed carefully the events of her elopement, with the Spirit of Freedom as *compagnon de voyage*.

It was fortunate, she argued, that she was still young enough to bear transplanting; that the resiliency of her nature was such that she could break away from old habits and form new ones at will.

How blue the sky was, like that of Italy! A group of children chattered at her feet in her mother tongue. She picked up one who had toppled over and restored it to his mother, who gave her the careless greeting of the class to one of their own sort who has performed a courtesy, sure to be returned in a moment or two. If she had been a lady, one of the well dressed kind who sometimes walked and sat in the park, that would of course have demanded a different vocabulary.

Clasped in her hand was the letter di-

rected to the manager of the lace school. She was on her way to deliver it. The Contessa Eleanora Albergati had explained in it that the bearer, Beatrice Baptista, was a special friend and protégé; that for certain family reasons, by which she was a victim of circumstances, she had been obliged to come to America. She asked as a special favor that the ladies interested in the New York school would engage her expert services, and more than that, exercise a friendly interest in her well being.

Nothing could be more graciously worded than this message. So sure was she of its efficacy that she allowed herself a few further moments of freedom before the incarceration commenced. She sat looking at the cross on the Judson tower, at the feathery tendrils of the treetops, at the great green stages lumbering along Fifth Avenue, the flying tricolor on the Brevoort House, the swarm of hurrying passers-by.

Would she ever tire of this lovely free life, of this country that welcomed the alien so hospitably, offering shelter and forgetfulness to all the tired souls weighed down with the inherited burdens of older civilizations? Luxury! Rank! Mere idle words.

She started suddenly. A young Italian girl approached. She thought for a moment it was Beatrice—the real Beatrice. As she advanced nearer, the resemblance ceased, but a new path of memory was opened by the incident. Supposing she had come to America, after all, and they should meet! What a meeting, fraught with such interest and excitement! What did her strange refusal mean, and the stranger manner that had preceded it? How was the little school, the dear girls? The Count—

Well, such memories were insistent. Little by little she must conquer any tendency to revert to them.

A small girl in a red dress, whose tangled curls framed her black eyes, guided her to the address of the lace school. It was within easy walking distance of her lodgings. She sat and waited patiently until her turn came to be seen.

How little prestige, stripped of its externals, really counted, she thought, not

without a touch of humor. No one suspected that she was other than she appeared, a poor girl, rather badly dressed in an ill fitting gown, waiting for work that would probably save her from starving. Her shyness and reserve strengthened this impression when she was finally interrogated by one of the officers. She was so afraid of betraying herself that she was hesitant in speech and manner for the first time in her life.

Yes, she had found a lodging—she gave the address—and was very comfortable there. Yes, her English was perhaps better than that of most girls of her class but she had had exceptional opportunities. Yes, the Contessa Albergati was a great help to the girls. She was very fond of them, and she believed they reciprocated this feeling.

Was she as beautiful and charming as reported? Well, for her part, she could not say exactly. "When you know a person well it is so difficult—" she stammered, and the manager cut off the halting syllables with another interrogation.

Her samples? She drew them from her bag and placed them on the table. The manager called several of the ladies who were looking over the goods, and they broke into exclamations of pleasure at the display.

She had come, it seemed, just in time, and a hasty acceptance of her services followed. The wage was small but one on which she could live with the strictest economy. She was allotted a specially attractive corner in the workroom, and was handed at once a parasol top which Maria Cardini had left unfinished the week before when she went away suddenly to be married. None of the other girls had proved expert enough to finish it, and it had been put aside for a more favorable moment.

At noon a bell rang and the girls gathered about the newcomer to ask questions. They had heard of Contessa Albergati—oh, yes, everybody had who came to the lace school. One of the girls had a cousin who had visited one of the tenants at Casa Tanagra. Was she such a grand lady, and yet so good to the girls? Another of the group stated that she had overheard the manager say that

no one could have written a more charming letter about an intimate friend. What kind of a husband did the Contessa have? Was he handsome? The cousin referred to had said that he was awfully wicked, but devoted to her, and that they walked and drove together like two lovers. A lady like her never did any work herself, could she really make and mend lace as an expert? Why should she when she did not have to? That was foolish, was it not?

The new worker answered these questions about herself shyly. She was relieved when they were over. Her conscience pricked her considerably. She was too new to deceit to play the part well. So when the afternoon session was over and directions had been given in regard to the next day's work, she allowed the other girls to precede her to avoid further personalities. Her reserved manner did not prompt their hospitality to encroach upon their hours of leisure.

Mrs. Deane, one of the teachers, stopped her on the way.

"If there is any difficulty at your lodgings—that is, if you are not perfectly comfortable there—let me know. We try to keep a supervision over the girls who are without families, and we particularly want you to feel that you can depend upon us in any emergency. The Contessa has done so much for the lace industry that to accede to any request she might make is a duty as well as a pleasure." She paused. "I have heard that she is extremely beautiful, cultured and gracious. It certainly has been a wonderful opportunity for a girl in your position, Beatrice, to have been so closely associated with her."

"Beatrice" nodded courteously, and, with a murmured word of thanks, hurried away.

It was a different world that she stepped into, no less lovely in the gray tints of the late afternoon than in the morning, but nevertheless she shivered slightly. Something weighed on her spirits. She must analyze that something. She found the same seat that she had occupied in the morning, and sat there for a dazed quarter of an hour.

Yes, her imagination had played her

false, that was it. She had lived for a while in a crystal palace of her inexpert architecture, and a stone had broken it to bits. She had really believed herself to be, in the few silly days of rambling about this strange place, what she represented herself to the casual, glancing world, a peasant girl of Italian birth, an immigrant seeking a livelihood. She had expected, when the picnicking was over and she had settled down to routine, that she would find a place among these girls of so different a class, and make herself perfectly at home there. She had dreamed of joining in their pursuits, of being one among them. She had discovered her mistake—too soon.

One of the girls had run after her breathlessly, and said:

"There's a dance tonight at Giacosa's. Will you come? The boys will be there, and Pietro, your lodging house keeper's son, will escort you."

"I am so tired," she pleaded, with a soft touch of the hand to prove her gratitude.

"Another time, then," and Julia ran off to tell the waiting ones who had sent her as messenger. They had offered their hospitality to the stranger and were unaccountably relieved at the refusal.

The dream, cherished in the morning, was shattered before night. There was no intimacy possible with these girls; not only their ways of life were different but their modes of thought. She could meet them at work each day. She might even, to avert suspicion, take part in their simple merrymaking occasionally, but that was all. She recalled that Julia had spoken of her coming to the party under the escort of Pietro, and wilted at the remembrance. The carnival was over. She had now to face realities.

Yet the silvery light of twilight was covering everything with an argent haze, through which diamond and ruby lights twinkled merrily. The homegoing crowd was rushing by her on fleet feet, laughing, jesting, merrymaking. A hurdy-gurdy stopped nearby, a swarthy-skinned player turning the handle; a couple of little girls lifted their skirts and danced. An Italian laborer swinging

his dinner pail lifted his voice and sang a Neapolitan song, "*Addio, Napoli.*" Italy and America seemed to have formed a phantasmagoria of sight and sound—Italy so near that she could not feel herself homesick if she would, America wrapping about her the garment of freedom.

And she was free. Nothing else really mattered.

She rose, the bad quarter of an hour over, to take up for the first time life in its most serious aspect. There was now no going back to her former life. She had cut that thread completely. She must accept the conditions she had made for herself. In the homely axiom of the country of her adoption, she had made her bed and must now lie upon it.

It was a month later that Gabrielle, holding her square of filet toward Julia for the latter's approval, said in an undertone, looking toward the Contessa, who sat in her corner as usual, solitary and absorbed:

"I don't know what it is. I've tried to make it out, but I can't. She seems so different, somehow. I don't feel easy with her a bit, but she's nice. She has refused to go to any of the dances, and when Camilla's aunt died last week, you know she did not attend the funeral—just sent flowers. She is—queer, I think."

Julia nodded. "She is very sweet and polite, but if she were a grand lady she could not be more offish."

Once lumbering Pietro, the nephew of the lodging house keeper, with whom she had exchanged civilities in the little kitchen, caught her suddenly alone on the stairs. He threw his arm about her.

"Let us keep company," he whispered. "Take me for your man. We'll marry just as soon as I have a little more money. I have some saved up now."

She struggled to free herself, and finally gave him a resounding blow on the face. The next morning she told his aunt of the occurrence.

"If I am annoyed that way again," she ended the recital, "I am sorry but I shall have to go."

The old woman, her pride deeply hurt, promised security. "I will speak to

Pietro," she said humbly. "He is proud, too. I am sure he will not again offend."

The promise was kept, but the homey feeling of the place was gone. Pietro met her with a scowl, when he could not avoid the encounter. First she thought she would find a new lodging place; then judgment came to her aid. If this experience were not repeated something worse might happen. It was better to stay where she was. She had been tactless. How could they know that Pietro's proposal was not a compliment? It would have been, if she were what she appeared to be. He was a fine young fellow, and in time he would find someone to love. She thought of the far-away Maria, one of her favorites in the lace school at Casa Tanagra. Perhaps; who could tell? Stranger matches had been planned and carried out. She remembered the story of the relative of Giuletta's, another one of the lace school here, who had been sent for hurriedly and had gone across the ocean to America to marry the strange lad her family had selected. Then she remembered with a sigh. She could not help Maria except by betraying her own secret.

In time she would make friends with Pietro, when he quite understood, and if she could not speak of the far-away Maria perhaps she might bring home one of the girls at the school, and ignoring his coolness and hurt pride, divert his amorous intentions where they could bring him and another happiness. For she must stay; she was at home in the sordid place, and her stock of ready money was low. The wages she could make were not sufficient for much moving about.

Her industry won her golden opinions at the school. One day it was suggested that a letter be written to Contessa Albergati, telling how well her protégé was doing and how pleased they were with her. The note was written forthwith.

Eleanora was on her way out, the afternoon work over, when Mrs. Deane called her.

"We have been writing to Contessa Albergati," explained the manager, "telling her what a good girl you are.

You can mail it yourself." In the kindness of her heart, the good-natured woman had believed to give the girl this reward for her industry.

The Contessa hesitated, and Mrs. Deane had finally to thrust it into her unwilling fingers.

"There—there; you need not be so shy. We have not said half enough."

The girl, with a supreme effort at self-control, muttered, "You are very kind," and bowing low, went out, closing the door softly after her.

"How shy she is!" said Mrs. Deane to one of her assistants. "She looks almost frightened when you call her by name. She must have had a very unhappy experience, as the Contessa hinted in her letter."

The subject of their conversation went into the square and sat down on her accustomed seat. Here was a new problem to face. Hitherto the masquerading at the school had been of a more or less negative sort. She had played a part, it is true, but the cues had been given her and she had not elaborated upon them. Now she must deliberately destroy a letter given to her in confidence, intended for another, and yet that other was herself.

She tore the letter into little bits, and with a half-guilty look about scattered them in the fountain.

As she returned to her bench, she was conscious of someone watching her with more than the usual interest of a passer-by. The eyes beneath the tattered hat of the wayfarer at the farther end of the bench seemed to burn into her soul. She turned away uneasily, recalling that she had had the impression of being followed many times of late, but only when she was tired and nervous.

Finally she turned and deliberately gazed at the intruder. She would be sure. That was the only way to fight a fear. She looked again. It was old Giuseppi.

He rose from his place and halted before her as soon as he realized that he was recognized. He took off his shabby hat and held it in his hands. She put her finger on her lips when he said "Contessa," and he stopped for a moment.

In that time she noticed that he had changed for the better. His clothes were

shabby but clean. His face was shaven. His gestures were few, and the wild look had left his dark eyes. There was no evidence of the savage beast which had enchained him so long. The ocean voyage, the separation from the environment of bitter memories, the continual change of scene, had affected, if not a complete cure, at least a partial one. He was quite rational, and her first feeling of fear gave place to curiosity.

"I thought at first you were Beatrice, my Beatrice," he commenced respectfully. "I talked to someone near the school one day and asked if Beatrice was there, and the girl said yes. When I found out I was puzzled, and have waited.

"When Beatrice first went away I wanted to follow and kill her, but somehow that feeling's all gone now. I only think of the *little* Beatrice, the one I used to love, the one I love now." He brushed his forehead, as if trying to make her realize that the cloud had lightened. "I was told she had gone to America, and I came. After you went away—" Giuseppe stopped, perplexed by these conflicting recollections.

"Yes—after I went away—" said the Contessa gently. "Yes, Giuseppe, what then—what did they say?"

"The Count said you had gone into retreat—that you would some day be a mother superior of a convent. He was broken-hearted, he said. He has not been to Casa Tanagra much since then."

"And Beatrice?" the Contessa asked. "You have no clue to her whereabouts?"

"She is not here—not with you?" he asked, surprised.

"No. I have not seen her nor heard from her since the time of her disappearance. She explained fully to him the preparations they had made for Beatrice's going away and the reasons therefor. She told of her surprise to find the clothes and the packet of letters untouched in Clematis Cottage, and the slip of paper assuring them of her safety and departure. "I have no idea where she is," she ended.

He looked at her uncertainly and repeated his question, as if he had not yet

sensed the explanation. "She is not in America—not with you?"

"No." She motioned him to sit beside her.

They sat silent for a little while, and nothing that had occurred made her more acutely conscious of the change in her condition than this quiet *tête-à-tête* with the old peasant.

After a while he repeated himself. "You know nothing—nothing, Contessa? She just slipped away like that?"

"Just that way, Giuseppe."

His keen eyes interrogated her mercilessly. If she had not come to the New World to look after his child, they seemed to say, why was she there?

She was impelled to answer.

"Giuseppe, I was not happy. The Count was a bad husband to me, and you were all mistaken in thinking me rich, free, happy. I was a slave, poor in everything except a few fine clothes and an empty heart."

Old Giuseppe's sympathy was grateful to her. She had longed for a human soul to turn to in the black moments.

"I am poor now, just a working girl, and I have buried the past deep, deep. No one here knows. No one must ever know. You understand?"

The rapidly coming night aroused them from their thoughts. The Contessa asked: "You have money and a place to stay?"

Giuseppe nodded again, and brought from his blouse a little bag of silver. "It will last me a long time, and will take me back if I have to return to find her."

She pointed out her lodgings across the square. "Come to see me there, and tell the woman you are a relative. Ask for Beatrice Baptista, you know."

She shook hands with him and walked away.

During the next few weeks she saw him constantly. Sometimes he would follow her to her work. Again she would find him on a bench in the square awaiting her return from the day's work. A few times he took advantage of her permission and came to smoke his pipe on the doorstep of her home. He was most



reticent to the questions of the lodging-housekeeper.

"She is the daughter of a relative of mine," he said to the subtle Latin interrogations. "No, we did not come to America together. I did not know she was here. I met her one day in the square. I am all alone, and she has been kind to me. Soon I return to Italy, and I may see her no more. That is all."

But his return was put off day after day. With Latin indolence he delayed his departure. They had both decided that Beatrice was not in America, and that it was her fear of the New World that had kept her from coming. From meager recollections he had evolved an idea as to where she might be found. It made him very unhappy to think of it. It was not a thing he could speak of.

His former admiration of the Contessa had now changed to adoration. She was kind and gentle always, protective in her manner, and insistent that he should stay until he was quite well, for while the improvement of his condition was great, he admitted that there were black moments. Some of these came after she had, little by little, told him of the cruel life she had led with Count Albergati.

"He struck you!" repeated Giuseppe at one of these recitals. He trembled with rage, and, seeing her mistake, she quieted him with a word. "Do not be disturbed, Giuseppe; it is all over now forever."

But Giuseppe brooded over this for a long time. To him she was a saint, an angel who had condescended to him.

"To strike with the hand is little," she said another time. "He did far worse than that; he struck my spirit, my trust, my belief. He was trying to make me a thing like himself."

Giuseppe understood. The Latin temperament always understands the sins against the heart. He learned to hate the Count in proportion as his admiration for her grew when he saw her, nurtured in luxury, accustomed to all the refinements of existence, going to her work in rain and storm as in the sunshine.

It was his duty to find his missing daughter, to restore her to her home, to work for her and try to eradicate from her mind the memory of his past injustices. But he felt a duty toward the Contessa Eleanora, too, a religious one. It was this reason that caused him to stay, so that while in gaining his health he might at the same time watch over her.

Sitting in the square, he thought of a way to help her. He planned it all out. He would not tell her, however. He would go back to Italy, find Beatrice and return with her to America, where they could both work for and take care of the Contessa.

One day the latter received a hasty scrawl with old Giuseppe's mark upon it. He had got somebody at the tobacco shop to write it. He had sailed for Italy, and wanted her to pray for him.

She felt strangely alone now that he was gone.

## VI

THE Contessa watched the progress of a private touring car through some East Side streets as she was returning to work after her noonday lunch. She caught the arm of a small boy who had a stone ready to throw at the occupant and shook him gently.

As she released him, her eyes met those of the woman in the car, who looked back and thanked her with a gracious bow for her interference. A moment and the machine was out of sight. With its departure a cloud of depression settled on her sensitive spirit. The woman was young and daintily dressed, and every gesture spoke a member of the leisure class. She was one of those who had the time and means for the graces of life, all the units of the complete existence that she had once taken as a matter of course, the allurements of which she had not imagined until she had cut herself adrift from them, and for which she longed at times with an ardor which shamed while it obsessed her.

For days she would exist in the negation of desire, going through the monot-

onous routine of work and leisure without companionship; then a sudden contrast, like that of the present moment, would present itself, and she would sink into fathoms of weak-heartedness and would have to fight to the surface with all the strength of her nature.

In the beginning she had combated these bad quarter-hours actively. She had visited the girls of the lace school and workshop, or invited them to visit her. She had endeavored zealously to interest herself in the petty questions of household affairs and social gossip, but to no avail. The remedy was more painful than the disease.

Finding this prescription of no avail, she read omnivorously books taken from a free library or borrowed from the teachers, who wondered at her thirst in this direction, without questioning the cause.

When she reached the shop the touring car was at its door, and as she passed through the corridor she caught a second glimpse of the attractive young woman talking earnestly to one of the officers. It was the morning when the work was on public view for sale and orders. She had usually little curiosity in regard to the buyers and examiners. This time she wondered if the woman was married, if she was happy, if—

She turned resolutely to her frame, picked up a thread and nodded to her co-workers.

Presently Mrs. Deane stood at the door of the room with the visitor. She looked about slowly, and finally she directed the glance of the young woman to the girl known as Beatrice. The visitor gave a start of pleased surprise, asked several questions, then nodded again.

Finally, Mrs. Deane called her: "Beatrice."

The girl rose and came forward, her eyes downcast. She was trembling a little. Supposing it were possible her secret were discovered in this way! She was too close to her past to have quite freed herself from its secret dread. It was always the subconscious thought of waking hours, the nightmare of her dreams. For, unsatisfactory as her life was at present, it was infinitely preferable to

that which she would have to endure if forced to return.

"Beatrice," said Mrs. Deane, with an added touch of impressiveness in her manner, "this is Mrs. Laurence. She has a wonderful collection of rare Italian laces at her country home. She wants you to go there to mend them. It may take a couple of months—possibly longer. Would you like to go? I have told her that I know of no member of the work force whom I can so heartily recommend. She has heard of your patroness, the Contessa Albergati. She is delighted to know that you have been taught and recommended by so lovely a person."

The girl bowed. Her first thought was one of humiliation at the continual web of deceit in which her life was tangled; then immediately came the reaction. Her face brightened. Her eyes shone. To live once more in a place where her soul was not daily offended by the intrusion of sordid details—to expand in an atmosphere where she could really feel at home, perhaps to converse each day with an equal—to be near someone in whom she could feel a genuine interest! With the teachers and officers of the lace shop she had always to be on her guard. With the girls she had learned there could be no halfway communication. She must be one of them or stay outside their interests. Fate had at length taken pity on her, it would seem.

"I will do my best," she said, a little stiffly, not daring to show her deep delight at the proposition. "I hope I shall prove satisfactory."

"I am sure you will," answered Mrs. Laurence cordially. "I will give you directions when and where to meet me. Could you go at once—this afternoon or tomorrow morning?"

"Tomorrow," ventured the girl. She had already determined to take her little stock of ready money and buy with it such articles as she felt she could no longer be without. The payment Mrs. Laurence agreed to give her, even deducting the commission for the lace shop, warranted this extravagance. She was excused for the afternoon, and received final instruction from Mrs. Laurence, who explained that the automobile was

to be left in town for repairs and that they would be forced to go by train.

However little the teachers had understood the newcomer, they were not lacking in kindness. One and another gave her little gifts, and all proffered advice.

"Remember," said Mrs. Deane, "your place in the school is always ready. Perhaps when you return we can make it a little more remunerative."

Some of the girls kissed her impetuously. She returned these evidences of sentiment warmly. Each caress was inspired by a spirit of penitence that she had not been able to give more to its recipient than the mere empty form.

She purchased some pretty blouses and a new skirt, and some fresh linen to replace her wasted stock. A new hat was added to the equipment. This she tried on before the cracked mirror, and even the distorting medium could not hide the fact that already a new expression had come into her face, replacing the one of resignation to the inevitable or that of inner revolt. It was an expression that reminded her of the carefree days in the English home and the madly happy ones of her betrothal.

When she was dressed for the journey, she looked at the result with satisfaction. Every detail was in perfect accord with her position, and yet nothing jarred. There were a few touches here and there of brilliant coloring, and this appealed to her strangely, for the early summer was rioting in her veins.

When her trunk was packed and sent by the carrier, she said good-bye to the lodging house keeper and to Pietro. She explained the reason of her going, and shook hands cordially with them both.

When she met Mrs. Laurence at the Grand Central Station, the latter did not for the moment recognize in the radiantly beautiful young woman before her the pupil of the lace shop, whose expression there, and when she had first encountered her in the street, had attracted her by its wistfulness.

The beautiful, supple figure was gowning in a soft white blouse and a well-fitting tailored skirt. The hat, with its roses of pastel shades, was cheap but be-

coming. She had about her an air of distinction, from the crown of her head to the tip of her new boots. She carried a bag and an umbrella, both trim and in keeping. In all but the suppleness of her form, in the creamy pallor of her complexion, the occasional gestures, graceful and significant, she might have been an American, the sister of her employer, rather than the hired companion.

Mrs. Laurence was delighted with her appearance. She loved beauty. But she was a close observer, under a sort of touch-and-go manner, and while she was greeting her and giving directions to the maid accompanying them, she was classifying the girl's place in the household.

"I sha'n't be able to put her to eat with the servants, after all; and I can't, of course, have her at the family table. Well, there is the little morning room; no one ever goes there but Ned, and he can smoke and read his paper somewhere else. I am glad she is what she is, so distractingly pretty. I hate to have ugly people about me. They give me the horrors."

In the train Mrs. Laurence made Beatrice sit by her, ostensibly to discuss with her the details of her work, in reality to find out a little more of the new inmate of her household than the meager items she had gathered at the shop. She had, before the rendezvous at the station, thought of her as an attractive young immigrant girl, with pretty, lustrous eyes and in them a sad expatriated look. She had taken her on the recommendation that she was a skilful worker—that was all.

She laid aside the magazine with which she had intended to while away the time of the journey and set herself resolutely to the task of drawing her companion out.

The girl responded to the inspiration of a sympathetic presence. With every mile that separated her from New York, from the lace shop and the sordid lodgings, she regained her lost poise. The artificial manner was replaced by a perfectly natural one. She smiled at the trees and flowers flashing by; her eyes became softer and more widely opened; a delicate flush painted the pale cheeks.

"You have been well taught," said Mrs. Laurence at last, having listened to her companion's descriptions of the Italian landscape.

That the young woman should be able to express herself eloquently in her own tongue was perhaps not surprising. Foreigners were usually good conversationalists, even those of the lower classes, but that she could use a foreign vocabulary with equal facility was surprising. She recalled her own schoolgirl struggles with "Corinne" and "Il Sposo," and wondered why Americans were not endowed at birth with such lingual faculty. In Mrs. Laurence's set the slang of the day was employed when a specially graphic description was needed and the possibilities even of the Anglo-Saxon tongue left completely unexplored.

"You must have been a good deal with Contessa Albergati," she inquired. The answer was this time a ready one. With her new equipment of wearing apparel, she had added some change of ideas. If she was to play a part, the Contessa determined she would no longer play it in such a lame and halting manner. Her hesitations were in themselves a betrayal. She made up her mind she would free herself from them. In accordance with this resolve, her reply was made immediately.

"Contessa Eleanora spent several years in England. She spoke the language like her own. She taught me."

"You speak French, too?"

"As well as English."

Mrs. Laurence's silent comment was that the new member of the household promised to be a more valuable addition than she had dreamed, but her only comment was a word of congratulation on her acquirements.

Shortly after the train stopped at a small station. An automobile was in waiting, and a drive of a quarter of an hour brought them to some iron gates which swung open at their approach. There was a further drive along an avenue, arched by some wonderful elms; bits of natural forest, from which the house took its name; and several gardens, among them a miniature Italian one at which the girl clapped her hands

gleefully. A silvery lake shone through some box hedges, and the open door of the country house showed an interior of luxury and comfort.

The new arrival was shown at once to her room. It was a dainty one, the walls a delicate cream, the curtains and cushions of chintz. From the window was a view of a wide esplanade, and just beyond was the tennis court. The housekeeper asked her, in a manner nicely adjusted to the position she understood her to hold, if she would have her dinner in her own room or below in the morning room, which Mrs. Laurence had designated for her use.

Tired with the journey and the new experiences, she decided to dine in her room.

While she was eating, with the appetite of youth and health, she heard the noise of motor cars. There was company, the maid informed her, to dinner. Mrs. Laurence entertained a great deal. Once she opened her door and peered out on the landing. From far away came the sound of light laughter and music. It was a sound that recalled the dances and dinners of other days. For a moment the old rebellion filled her heart. A girl's voice accentuated it. If she had been less true to herself, to her ideals; if she had accepted the world at the value put upon it by the majority of its tenants, would she not in time have been able successfully to kill unwelcome scruples and become like the rest of them?

After all, what did one gain by going against the current selected as the surest and safest to the end? But *what* end? That was it—that was the real question—the end!

She looked into the heavens, where a single, pale star shone luminously over a jagged tree line. Somehow, in the fever of her thought, it seemed like the touch of a cool hand. The spires of the distant wood stretched away and away into a blot of indistinguishable outlines. It rested her to put herself so in accord with nature. No, she did not regret. She drew the curtain softly and was soon asleep.

For a week she worked steadily. The

morning room, set aside for her use, was filled with the beautiful collection which was the pride of the owner's heart. Some of it was an inheritance; some had been purchased in many trips to the other side; some represented wedding, birthday and anniversary gifts. A great deal was in bad condition. After looking it over carefully, she gave her decision. There was none that would trouble her to repair, but it was not work that could be hurried; even the generous allowance of time specified by Mrs. Laurence might be insufficient.

This declaration was heard with unconcealed pleasure, for Mrs. Laurence had secretly determined that when the lace mending was over she would find something else for the girl to do. She must be retained; she was too valuable to be lost or easily replaced.

It was true, as the maid had informed her the night of her arrival, that the house was never at rest. There were dinners, dances, golf meets, luncheons, bridge parties, tennis tournaments, all the many ways with which leisure manages to kill time. In taking her daily promenades, in going to and from the village on various errands, the pretty lace worker was sure to encounter some of the many guests. Her striking appearance always caused a flattering comment. Several of the young men, week end guests, joked about her with their hostess and demanded an opportunity to make her acquaintance.

"I haven't broken a heart for a year," said one of these, who had been aroused to an abnormal interest by a verbal description of the pretty sewing girl by one of the older women of the party, who had been with her several hours, learning a new lace stitch.

"Give me a chance at her, Mrs. Laurence. The girls we know are all so keen, we don't stand any show at all. Perhaps I'd have better luck with the Latin temperament."

Mrs. Laurence shook her head. She was too shrewd to give the matter the attention even of a jesting discussion, and the subject was closed as soon as commenced by her smile, nod and immediate interest in other matters.

In reality, the Contessa's life at Woodlands was as lonely as had been that of the furnished room in Washington Square and the daily routine at the lace shop. Lonelier, in a way, for it furnished her more vivid contrasts with her chosen lot and the existence to which she belonged by birth, education and desire. But the surroundings of the new home, the good food, the lack of worry, the atmosphere of peace and content, were all silent forces working to her good. She grew more beautiful every day. There were moments when she allowed herself to hope—for what she could not tell, only that life promised a fuller, deeper happiness than she had ever known.

One of the bypaths of the Woodlands Park led by way of an evergreen arch, through which one had to pass by pushing aside a curtain of hanging vines, to a tiny garden of herbaceous plants. It was a retreat that few of the visitors ever discovered, and none of the family intruded upon. Here the sewing girl walked every morning before breakfast, sure that her matutinal rambling would not be disturbed by the curious glances from the many windows of the house or by stray guests or servants. Here, usually with a book of poems in her hand, which she read as she walked slowly about the miniature enclosure, she managed to have a little time to herself, and commenced the day with a benison of peace which no after irritation could outbalance.

One morning she was standing, her back to the arch, her arms above her head, trying to reach a great red rose that was just beyond her reach. The dew from its fragrant petals splashed in her face, and she laughed as if it were a human thing trying to punish an intruder.

She did not hear the footsteps behind her, but at the quiet, "Here, let me cut it," she turned suddenly to face a stalwart masculine figure dressed in white linen. He had slipped over the turf silently in his tennis shoes. He was tall, blond, and even in his negligee suit had an exceptionally well groomed look. His cheeks were deeply tanned and his blue eyes were as merry as those of a child's.



They were standing so close that their garments touched. An electric glance passed between them, one of those imperative, disrupting messages of affinity that sometimes in a crowd flash between passers-by who may never meet again but in that second have given proof of a relationship of some past life or that to come. It was an experience that left the Contessa trembling. She took the severed rose, thanked him with a bow and disappeared.

Ned Borland threw himself on the stone bench and finished his cigar. He had caught glimpses of his sister's new employee many times before, but he was rather fastidious in his creed regarding women, and had not given her more than a passing thought.

When he had finished his smoke he rose, went back to the house, took a hearty breakfast and with his golf clubs started for the country club. At noon Mrs. Laurence brought over the motor filled with a party of young women. He joined them, and was as usual the life of the crowd. After luncheon, instead of following Miss Blagden, one of the number whom he usually companioned zealously, particularly when athletic matters were to the fore, he sank into an easy chair by the side of his sister, who looked surprised at his unusual lack of interest in the prettiest and brightest girl of their special coterie. She realized intuitively that there was a purpose in his act, and wondered, as she had wondered many times of late, if he were about to announce his engagement to the young lady mentioned.

Being a woman of tact, she commenced to talk about something else, foreign to her thought. Her brother accorded it only cursory attention.

Suddenly he blurted out:

"Tell me, sis, about that pretty lace girl."

"Oh, Ned!" Mrs. Laurence's tone was one of reproach.

"I met her by chance in the little garden," he explained. "By Jove, she's a beauty!" He turned and looked at his sister. "Claudia, I've seen many handsome women, but I've never seen one like her."

He realized suddenly the intensity of his speech, and tried to hide his feeling by a light, mocking laugh. But his heightened color and his inability to play a part successfully were not able allies to nonchalance.

"She is handsome," admitted Mrs. Laurence, while she was thinking of the irritating complexities this interest of her brother might arouse. To have a girl so useful spoiled by the attentions of a man's idle, unmeaning moments—it was a shame. Her first thought was the usual feminine one: she must get rid of the girl at once. Her second was that she would not put herself to such an inconvenience unless absolutely driven to it. "I believe I can depend on her," she concluded in this mental wandering. "She has shown great good sense in keeping so secluded, and never obtruding on our notice about the house and grounds. Of course it would be useless to appeal to a man's common sense; he never has any where a pretty girl is concerned."

She rose from her chair as if to end the subject, then settled herself into it anew. She must find out when and where they had met. His perfect candor quieted the incipient dread that the acquaintance might have been going on a long time.

"I never spoke to her before, and never wanted to, although the boys were raving about her in the smoking room the other night. One of them met her in the village and pretended to have lost his way—thought he'd have her company home. She just pointed to the road and slipped into a nearby shop. I didn't have any better luck. She thanked me for cutting the rose, and was gone before I could say 'Jack Robinson.'"

Mrs. Laurence did not show the satisfaction she felt. Her worldly wisdom had not been at fault. Her protégé was too sensible a girl to risk her position for idle flatteries.

"She's charming," she admitted with a yawn, "but I suppose, like all Italian women, she will fade in a few years. Isn't it strange how quickly they mature, and how quickly they become just fat, shapeless beings? She, of course, will be no different from the rest of her class."

"That's the surprising part of it," said

Ned. "I've been all over Italy. I never saw a *contadina* that looked like her. She's got all the marks of the thoroughbred. I'll wager her staying in as long as an American or English woman when it comes to endurance and form. She speaks English, doesn't she?" he interrogated, with a yawn as pronounced as that of his sister's.

"Perfectly."

"And French, too." He took a small volume of De Musset's poems from his pocket and held it up. The marginal notes are in three languages. I found it in the garden after she left. Jove, she knows a lot for a girl in her position!"

Mrs. Laurence put out her hand for the book, but he thrust it into his pocket with a laugh.

"What—let you decamp with my ammunition? I guess not."

Mrs. Laurence lost her temper. She forgot all her intended diplomacy.

"I won't have it, Ned, a vulgar flirtation with a seamstress under my roof. If you must forget you're a gentleman, please find a different place in which to disgrace yourself."

Instead of being angry in his turn, her brother turned to her a face whose eyes were brimming over with laughter.

"I'm going to town for a few days, sis. Don't worry. Perhaps I'll have forgotten all about her when I return."

He got up suddenly and rushed down the steps to meet Ruth Blagden. In a moment, noting his deferential manner and the air of perfect sympathy and understanding between them, Mrs. Laurence forgot her fears.

They returned the next morning when on the table devoted to the lace work she saw the volume of De Musset's poems. She interrupted the usual humdrum conversation regarding the day's programme to say carelessly:

"So you got your book all right. My brother—"

"He returned it to me this morning on his way to the train. He said he found it in the little garden."

The Contessa's tone was colorless and baffled her interlocutor, who could not, under the circumstances, pursue the conversation.

A day or two afterward, Mrs. Laurence picked the Contessa up in the village street and took her home in her car. On the way she pointed out the country place of the Blagdens. Ruth Blagden was standing on the porch, and waved gaily. Mrs. Laurence returned the greeting, and then uttered the casual statement which had been the reason of the long *détour* homeward:

"A friend of my brother's—a dear girl. It has been going on some time, so long that I feel as if she were already my sister."

Then she changed the conversation, not explaining the meaning of the mysterious word "it," an explanation of which between two women in this connection is always unnecessary.

A week later Ned Borland returned to Woodlands, and the following morning, seeing from his window that the seamstress was directing her steps in an entirely different direction from the little garden, he hurriedly dressed and followed her.

## VII

ONE evening, four weeks after this, Ned Borland walked up and down through his suite of bachelor apartments, smoking and thinking deeply. Once or twice he took his pipe from his mouth, knocked it on the edge of the table and refilled it. Then he commenced his tramp anew.

Over and over in his mind he retraced the recent events as they related to the beautiful Italian girl who was in the humble position of a lace mender in his sister's home. She was a girl of alien race, of unknown parentage, of inferior class—and the American man, democratic in creed as he believes himself to be when his theories run counter to social traditions, in his individual case is as conservative as a member of royal blue books.

He had the clean cut view of life of the young man who has, in the early days of liberty, differentiated between freedom and license. He had maintained a fastidious standard, and that there could be any alternative between marriage and

a complete separation from the girl who had so enthralled him that at the mere thought of her the blood went leaping madly from heart to brain, he did not allow. He respected her and respected himself.

But—marriage!

He scorned the opinion of the world when it attempted to trammel him, and yet he knew that his serious acts were governed by it. He had seen many men, not sink into the depths, but what to a man of his ideas was even worse—drop from the best into the second class, weighted by a domestic *entourage* not quite in keeping with what had been expected of them.

He knew that his sister would forgive him, but between the forgiveness of silence in regard to a settled difference, the occasional meetings, the formal dinners and their life of intimacy as it now existed, what a chasm!

He could see Miss Blagden and the rest of the young women with whom he had so long companioned taking his marriage with their usual manner of well bred indifference, welcoming his wife with a slight exaggeration of courtesy, to put her perfectly at ease. How often he had taken part in conferences preliminary to such forced amenities! He could see them, as they had always done in like cases, dropping away so gradually that no feeling of resentment could be formulated.

He was not a man given to introspection. He did not usually analyze his own or other's motives, but he had reached a *cul de sac*; retreat and advance must be studied carefully.

A few nights before he had been strolling about the grounds of Woodlands, and had heard his sister give orders to the chauffeur to take out one of the cars and give Signorina Baptista, who had been complaining of a headache, a little spin in the fresh air. A sudden whim took possession of him. He followed the chauffeur to the garage, put a five-dollar note in his hand and borrowed his coat, cap and goggles. Later, when they were miles away from the house on a lonely stretch of road, he had slipped off his disguise and laughed at the girl's

surprise. Her fear and indignation amused his frolic loving spirit.

It pleased him to note that her, "What would your sister say?" expressed no special anger against him for such a daring act but merely the thought of the consequences if it were discovered, suggesting herself as an accomplice rather than a victim of a practical joke. He was not lacking in tact, and did not put the thought into words, but in her previous self-communings the Contessa had already admitted that word "accomplice" with many twinges of conscience and realized that her resistance, active in the beginning, had all at once become of the passive sort.

The first meetings, apparently by accident, had been followed by those of deliberation and forethought, a word in the little garden, a walk back from the village, a meeting in the corridors of the country mansion. Always the half-teasing, half-superficial manner of Borland seemed to put her in the wrong as one who was actually unwomanly in her suspicions. Once he had come to her with a sprained wrist and she had been obliged to bandage it. She had felt him thrill under the touch of her fingers, and had tried vainly to hide the color that flooded her cheeks and the light in her eyes from his scrutiny.

She had escaped him often, led him on false trails, was elusive, angry, hurt, capricious, all the varying moods of the woman pursued. Never had she given him any satisfaction, not even the welcoming word or the joyous glance of the woman taken unawares who, in this way, betrays her secret predilection.

But of late she had not changed the route of her morning walk; when she heard his step in pursuit she no longer hurried to shelter; when he knocked at the door of her working room she no longer answered by opening it and barring his ingress by an erect figure, standing with arms carelessly raised across the aperture. Whether this change of attitude was due to indifference or fatigue, or whether she had at last succumbed to the force of his unspoken admiration, he could not tell. Beneath the caprice of the moment was the desire to know.

He turned the machine to the side of the road, opened the door, stepped inside and sat beside her.

"No one will find out," he whispered, lowering his voice and bending his head toward her. "The chauffeur has gone to the roadhouse, and he'll stay there until he hears me coming back."

Her cheeks flushed at the thought of being put in such a position, an adventure gossiped about in servants' quarters.

"He's a good sort," he said, answering her unspoken criticism. "He'll think it's one of my jokes. He won't say a word. If I didn't trust him, I wouldn't have done it."

At the left the sky was in a flame of protest against its coming extinction of light and color. To their right the cool green woods were lulled by twilight breezes; in front a long white ribbon of road stretched on and on into infinity, and the darkness was creeping up behind. Occasionally a machine would go whirring by, too intent on annihilating time and space to heed their presence.

Slowly his arm stole about her, his lips sought hers, held them for a moment; then she drew away with a horrified exclamation.

"Don't! Don't! You must not!" In a second's flash she seemed to vision all the complexities that faced them. During long, wakeful hours she had interrogated herself; then she had interrogated no more. But one does not drift for long on an ocean freighted with cargoes of human passions.

The deferred moment for decision had come. She opened the door of the car and stepped into the road, in spite of his detaining hand. Her face was white as snow; her eyes flashed; her body was rigid with protest.

"I will walk home unless you promise me to take your seat and never to touch me again."

His face paled, too, and the line of his straightened shoulders was as rigid as his own.

"'Never' is a long word. I will take you back now without annoying you further."

The machine sped along the home-stretch. On her lips she seemed to feel the kisses burning into her soul. What was she to do? She was so friendless, so lonely, so hungry for what she must deny. How could she fight the coming battle? Not against him—that would be comparatively easy—but against herself, the only real struggle in which one ever engages.

He was not surprised at her attitude. His hand had been forced by the power of a natural impulse, overcoming judgment. He had not intended more than to come to a clearer understanding of her reason for so zealously avoiding him in the beginning and of her indifference later on. He had not formulated what he intended to say. He had wanted to convince her of his respect and admiration. He had wanted, as he phrased it in his thought, to put himself right, and he had, in accordance with that desire, the subconscious meaning of his caprice, taken advantage of his moment.

As they wheeled along the circuitous roadway that led to a side porch, from which she could get quietly into the house, avoiding the possibility of meeting anyone who might notice her agitation, the chauffeur stepped from the shadows, and as she mounted the steps, with a silent bow of farewell, she heard the orders given to take Mr. Borland into the city that next morning.

She knew what this order meant as well as if it had been explained to her in detail. He was going away to have, in isolation, the inevitable struggle between duty and inclination, to come to some definite conclusion in regard to their future, which the hasty, unpremeditated kiss had made necessary to his sense of honor.

She threw off her clothes, loosened her hair and flung herself on her bed. Through her brain marched the procession of events which had culminated in this episode. For many weeks she had suppressed all the natural impulses of her being; in one second she had undone all the good work—the second in which she had lain unresisting in his arms and had responded to his caress.

From the moment they had met in the

little garden she had never deceived herself into believing that this was aught but the great love that comes to a woman once and once only in her life. She had met handsome, attractive young men during her stay in England, not one of whom had made her pulse beat faster. She had moved in the highest circles of Italian society, and had never been allured into more than the most ephemeral interest in the men who tried to dance attendance upon her.

But this young, joyous, clean-minded and clear thinking American had inspired her immediately with such a depth of feeling that she had at once known the truth: that without him life would be a futile thing; with him—she had never pursued that thought before to any definite conclusion.

His gaiety had never deceived her, as it had many others. Underneath she had discerned the iron fiber that defines the man of strong feeling and determined purpose. She knew, too, that the attraction between them was mutual, and had been so from the first glance.

In love one is psychic. When he returned, as he soon would do, he would offer her the devotion of his life, the honor of his name, his protection and love. If she should state that she did not care for him, he would not believe her, after the twilight moment by the roadside; if she should run away he would pursue; if she should affirm that she had left behind in the country of her birth a waiting lover, he would laugh at such an absurdity.

She sat on the edge of her bed and pushed the hair from her eyes.

Suppose she should tell him the truth, the whole naked truth—what would happen? Would he guard her secret, become her friend, and sooner or later would they drift on those rocks of passion where so many have been shipwrecked? Would he, maddened by the thought of her unhappiness, her humiliation, her loss of place, take the next steamer and embroil himself in a quarrel with Count Albercati? There was nothing more likely, and nothing with a surer result, for the Count, a noted swordsman and pistol shot, might neg-

ligently use him as a mark for his skill, if he did not save himself the trouble by hiring an assassin to avenge the honor of his name.

It sounded melodramatic, as she visualized the picture, but the Count was of a melodramatic race, and blood is stronger than civilizing influences.

Whichever way she turned, she saw nothing clear ahead.

She heard the cathedral clock in the hall strike the hours. Bubbles of thought grew, broke and boiled anew in the cauldron of her brain.

Suddenly she rose from her restless pillow. She spoke aloud in the obsession of thought: "That." Her teeth chattered, and she looked over her shoulder as if terrified at the suggestion. "That." Dared she? The thought brought a flame to her cheeks. She clasped her hands about her upraised knees. "That." Why not?

She was, to use the old formula, wife in name only. She had thrown all but the memories of the old life aside. They had ceased to chain her.

She stepped from the bed and went to the window. Crouched on a cushion, she crossed her arms on the sill and placed her face upon them, looking out into the mysterious depths of the outer world from which strange noises came to her, the cries of lonely birds, the fluttering of foliage, the unnamed sounds that make of the darkness such a thing of mystery and fear.

If she refused this happiness, what remained to her? A clear conscience, it is true, a knowledge that she was in accord with the laws of state and church, that held her and would not set her free. Duty—by its side she would march cautiously through days from which everything humankind cherishes is eliminated except the sense of work conscientiously performed. And these days would lead directly from the land of the might-have-been into a future where she would gradually lose even her powers of resistance and sink into the rut of the commonplace, where she had deliberately placed her feet.

She had made a fair trial, and she believed that she had found herself. She



was apparently not of those who get their happiness in the bread and butter struggle with conditions. She could not, by way of some hybrid faith, reduce her feelings to a negative state and so reap a barren joy. Happiness must come to her through her emotions, God-given, God-meant, the inspiration of all human activities.

The contrast—she felt illumined by the great white flood of love and light that enveloped her. She saw herself one in a marriage where love and loyalty were the leading *motif*. She closed her eyes on the mere idea of its bliss, so subverting, so intoxicating.

The clock struck the warning that dawn was near, and the most important hours of her life were sealed in the envelope of the past. She opened her eyes, closed a moment before in the trance of excessive bliss, to face the fears that even the glory of love could not longer hide from her inner view.

It was well to depend upon the affection of one man; it was equally well to depend upon the vengeance of another. She could no longer thrust this idea out of sight; she must face it in case, in case—

America, she knew, was the last place where Count Albergati would think of looking for her. He himself held it in supreme contempt as a country of monstrous crudities and shortcomings. He knew that, in a less aggressive manner, she had often voiced his sentiments. She blushed now at the unintended disloyalty to the wonderful land of her adoption, which she already loved and hoped never to leave permanently.

That her husband firmly believed she had eloped with a lover, still unknown to his zealous search, and was living incognito with him in some European city, she was as confident as she was that he had protected his name by her fictitious sequestration in some imaginary retreat.

Old Giuseppe—she could depend upon him absolutely. But there was the fear of herself, the greatest fear. Could she accept from the man she loved the best he had to offer, the honor of an old name, his fortune, his future, his protection, his love and trust, and return

him—nothing, not even loyalty? Could she live by his side year after year, bear him children, perhaps, and all, all a living lie?

She bit her lips until the blood came. She would not permit herself such weakening admissions. In the eyes of the world, it is true, she was a wife. She knew herself free, whatever church and state might say, by the action of the one to the contract who, having broken its spirit and letter, had so made the contract void. Did her devotion, faith, companionship count for nothing? The old life was dead; she had been born again through the chrysalis of suffering.

The old relations—they were as remote from those she intended to assume as the shores of Italy were from those of America; as distinct as this new country with its youth, its strength, its enthusiasm was different from the decrepit corpse of the older civilization, which had outgrown all but its desire for unhealthy stimulants to prevent its dying of decay.

She threw herself on the bed. The decision was made. She slept soundly until awakened by the rap of the maid on the door.

At ten o'clock she was in the morning room, as quiet, as industrious as ever; but to a close observer the pallor of her cheeks, the dark circles about her eyes, the occasional trembling of her fingers and the corrugation of her brow showed evidences of the battle.

The door of the room opened softly. Mrs. Laurence came in.

She, too, was pale, and she crossed the intervening space between them hurriedly, as if she feared her purpose might fail her.

"Beatrice."

Their eyes met. The younger woman saw that the other's suspicions had been aroused.

Mrs. Laurence had always treated her lace mender with a certain respect which she could not quite analyze to her own satisfaction. It was not only that she addressed her as an equal but her manner always implied something more. It was that "something more" that eluded

her search. In this crisis she could not, did not upbraid.

Her tone was sad rather than condemnatory, for, added to the overthrow of domestic arrangements, she felt a personal disappointment at the coming separation from someone she had liked so well.

"Beatrice, Marie tells me that she saw you come in last night with Mr. Borland, who had taken the chauffeur's place. She may have been mistaken. I want to believe that she was."

Marie, the French maid, it was the gossip of the servants' hall, was desperately in love with the chauffeur; that he had been sent out with the Italian girl was a matter of jesting wonder in that stronghold of intrigue. Marie had secretly watched for his return to quiet or emphasize her suspicions.

As well by Marie as in any other way. It was a truth bound to be discovered.

The girl folded her work and rose sedately. "Marie was correct, Mrs. Laurence. I was in the car. Your brother took the chauffeur's place for an hour."

"And you have met him before—secretly?"

"I have met him before—many times."

"You are not ignorant of the risks you have run. A girl in your position cannot afford them." Mrs. Laurence paid the obvious compliment to her common sense. "It is futile for me to enumerate them. You know them as well, better than I. You are too clever a girl to have acted blindly or in the dark."

"Yes, I know."

"I am sorry."

There was no answer, and after a moment Mrs. Laurence said, even more quietly:

"I think it would be well, Beatrice, for you to go right away. I cannot govern your actions, nor, unfortunately, those of my brother, but I can prevent your meeting here." She waited a moment, noting the girl's shrinking, as one who has received a physical blow.

"If you will promise that you will not see him again, I will not report the episode at the shop. You can go back there,

and I will write them a letter commending your industry and ability."

The other did not hesitate. Her determination was fixed.

"I will promise not to communicate with him. If he seeks me out I cannot refuse to see him." The firmness of the tone did not conceal the fact that she was conscious of and hated to add to the pain of the other woman. With this Mrs. Laurence had to be content.

There was no train to the city for several hours. The discharged seamstress shut herself in her room, did her simple packing, and then sat at the window, taking a last look at the park of Woodlands.

She was not self-deceived. She was ready to commit an act of which no one could approve nor perhaps forgive. She was willing to sin against sacred and social laws. She did not attempt to excuse or deny, but she realized that nature was a stronger force than judgment, reason, tradition or ethical codes. She recalled the lines of the English poet she and her cousin Lily had loved so well:

And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost  
Is the ungirt loin and the untrimmed lamp.

Well, her loins were girt, her lamp trimmed. At least she would not be snuffed out of existence by the twin blades of indecision and slothful desire.

A rap at the door notified her of the luncheon hour. Without opening it, she said to the maid that she did not care for anything to eat. A short time elapsed, then the servant returned with the announcement that Mrs. Laurence had particularly requested that she take something before the journey. The door was opened, the tray with its dainty contents accepted. She swallowed a few spoonfuls of tea, took a few luscious berries, then pushed the remainder away.

There was the sound of an approaching car. She stood up, suddenly alert, as a familiar voice was heard through the window.

Ned Borland answered the surprised interrogation of his sister.

"I know, Claudia, but can't a fellow change his mind? Pike was taking his new car out, and brought me along.

We've broken every speed law in the decalogue."

Another interval elapsed. What was happening? Had Mrs. Laurence told him what had occurred? Would she keep it from him, fearing the immediate result of that confession? Would they meet before her departure?

Of one thing she felt sure: whatever his superficial excuse, he had returned for a solitary purpose, and that purpose— Her heart beat like a trip hammer. She felt that she would suffocate.

Finally there was a knock at the door. In the manner of the maid who delivered the message she could read that already there was knowledge in the household of some untoward happening.

"Mrs. Laurence and Mr. Borland ask that you come to the morning room at once."

She stumbled down the stairs and through the hall to the place designated, already denuded of its piles of lace and linen. He was standing looking out of the window at the oval of the little garden, and in the tense lines of his figure she read the future. He was going to dare all, like herself. Mrs. Laurence left the room as she entered.

He turned at the sound of the opening door and came toward her. He took her hand in his and smoothed it gently.

"Beatrice, dearest, the worst is over. We may have a hard road for a little, but it is worth the few humiliations, is it not? We are all alone now, you and I."

She bowed silently—she could not trust herself to speak; and after a moment he put his arms about her, soothing her, promising, entreating, lavishing upon her all the tenderness of the man's feeling.

"We will be married right away—it will be better."

She drew away from him. The color fled from her face.

"Oh, no; not right away. I must have a little while."

"But why?"

She could not tell him the real reason that the turmoil of feeling had been so great that she must have a time to adjust herself to conditions, for balancing the weighty events of the future. She would

never draw back, but the step was so precipitous that she shrank naturally from the edge. The past had, little by little, become intangible, but at his words it had leapt into life anew and had held her in its embrace, as a stagnant serpent might recoil and spring from its hibernation in the warmth of a sudden springtime.

He already assumed over her the tyranny which from him seemed as adorable as it would have been repellant from another.

"Dear, there is no other way. My sister is furious with us both. I don't blame her. She will come around when it is all over. She must. There are only the two of us, and we've been chums from our cradles. You can't go back to the old life."

His words were idly chosen, but they made her more apprehensive than ever. She must have a further breathing space for guarding the coming years by every possible precaution against discovery.

"In a few weeks."

"Not weeks—days, dear."

It was very sweet to know that he wanted her so intensely. At every caress, every whispered word, every loving vow, she was more determined that she would take this one and only opportunity life had ever offered her for happiness. She felt, with a curious sense of exultation, that some of the unfortunate had to pay for their happiness after its fruition; she had paid for hers beforehand, and surely fate was not such a dishonest creditor that it would demand a double toll.

The stress of feeling was too great. The sleepless night, the interview with Mrs. Laurence, the hopes, the fears, the ecstasies were subverting. Suddenly her calm was broken by hysterical sobs, and for the first time he realized the heights and depths of the Latin temperament, whose poise he had never seen disturbed before.

He soothed her with masculine clumsiness.

"I know, dear. I know. Have your cry. I'll think it all out. You are not to be bothered about being married or anything else." He crumpled up his hand-

kerchief and dried her tears with a gesture, whose tenderness made amends for its lack of finesse.

"I've an idea. There's an old lady, a friend of the family, who is in reduced circumstances and takes what she calls 'paying guests.' She will do anything for me. I will take you there. You can be married with her as chaperon—a very proper one, I can assure you. She is a relic of the old Knickerbockers. Your things are all ready?"

"All ready."

"Then I will meet you at the station. It will be better to avoid gossip here by not going away together."

He kissed her and hurried away. Half an hour later Contessa Eleanora, heavily veiled, responded to the summons of the second maid that her carriage was waiting, and departed without seeing anyone of the household.

At this very hour, the veritable Beatrice was leaning far out of the window of a shabby lodging house in a retired street of Florence, far removed in distance and appearance from the dainty apartment in which Count Albergati had first installed her. The change was made necessary, so he informed her, by some losses of a financial character that had occurred.

The Count had visited her but once since the moving, several weeks before. She was pale and thin. The cheaply pretty clothes she had gaily bought in the first few weeks of her happiness now hung about her wasted frame. The hectic flush of consumption was in her cheeks; her eyes were large and unnaturally brilliant. She moved with languid gestures about the sordid room.

She had been sitting there hour after hour, as she was accustomed to sit, waiting, waiting, waiting for someone who did not come and whose coming would have been worse than his absence, and yet for whom she longed, cursing her own weakness.

Quickly she drew away from the window. It could not be, and yet she would have taken her oath that it was.

She peered through the wooden shutter at the face of the old man who was

walking along with his eyes raised, as if searching a certain designated locality. It was he. It was her father. How good it was to see him! And he had a new look in his face, the look of former days. His clothes were clean and brushed. Could it be possible that the shattered reason had been mended, as she had always believed it would be?

What should she do? Supposing he and the Count should meet? Could she go away from the man who had treated her so vilely and yet whom she adored? Could she let her father leave her here, to die like a bird in a cage?

She did not have to make the decision. While she waited, weak and faltering, there was a heavy footstep on the stairs, a heavy knock at the door, and in a moment she was sobbing all her repentance and grief on old Giuseppi's shoulder.

## VIII

THE Contessa put off her marriage from day to day. Her lover had thought her capricious before during the early days of his pursuit, but he had to acknowledge that she had scarcely begun to put him to the test.

The money she had saved from the weeks of work at Mrs. Laurence's, the sale of a jewel now and then, sufficed to pay her modest expenses. To each demand that she name the day she had a fresh excuse or an old one made to do yeoman service.

Her caprice never deceived him, however. The light in her eye, the tone of her voice would convince a man less sensitive than he of her exact feeling. With that knowledge he had to be content for the present. In answer to his constant pleading against this unnecessary delay, she would explain over and over that when her last scruple was overcome she would tell him immediately, and they would be married when and where he would. Meanwhile she enjoyed the season of a woman's love, the season of hope rather than of fulfillment.

He was forced to respect these scruples, ignorant as he was of their real nature, for he himself had his black moments;

but, generally speaking, nothing showed the different points of view of man and woman than their attitude in this crisis. He, determined, wished to have the ceremony at once; she, equally determined, hesitated and shrank from the finality.

Patient at first, he at length became restive at the delay. He commenced to lose sympathy with a state of indecision so incongruous with her usual frank, uncompromising sincerity.

Once Mrs. Laurence came to call upon her. They spent a few unhappy moments. Afterward Mrs. Laurence confessed to her husband that, embarrassing as the experience had been for her, her hostess had borne herself with a dignity and sweetness that shamed her own meager attempts. Mr. Laurence, furious at the coming *mésalliance*, grunted inarticulately at the confession, and repeated the order given before that the girl be kept out of his way. He had laughed at his wife's fears in the beginning, denominating them the wild imaginings of a purely feminine mind which never used judgment or logic and saw in every pretty face a danger to the masculine members of her household.

He was a man small in body but with large interests, which had given him a careworn look, an abrupt, irritable manner and a dictatorial speech. Ned Borland was one of the few people to whom he ever unbent; and that a man could make such a fool of himself over a pretty sewing girl who, he said to himself as he chewed the end of his cigar vigorously, could have been bought with a modest establishment, equipped with everything but the marriage certificate, was an act he could neither understand nor forgive.

Mrs. Hageborn, with whom the Italian girl had secured a temporary shelter, soon became deeply attached to her beautiful lodger with the soft eyes, the gracious manner, the air of perfect repose and good breeding. She admired the good taste displayed in keeping at arm's length a man so madly in love, wishing patiently to test him—which seemed unnecessary—or to bring his family to a more pronounced state of acceptance—which was desirable.

Mrs. Hageborn often accompanied the Contessa on her long daily walks, and they sewed, talked and read together while, in addition, the Contessa learned little details of the American *ménage* which like everything else in this new country she accepted as the acme of perfection, the resultant product of all ages and all lands.

They did not refer to the subject so insistently in the thoughts of each until one day when Mrs. Hageborn broke through her reserve.

"You are making a great mistake, my dear."

The Contessa had come to her after an hour spent with her fiancé. She had been weeping bitterly in the few moments that had elapsed since their separation, and there were traces of tears on her face.

"A great risk," she repeated. "It is evident to the most casual glance that the man, to use a trite expression, worships the ground you walk on. That is a compliment from any man; it is a *great* compliment from a man like him, whose attentions would be an honor to a duchess. But he is human. This state of affairs cannot continue. Personally, I am amazed at his forbearance."

"So is he," said the other, jesting to keep herself from another flood of tears.

In the seclusion of her own room she admitted that she had reached the end of the rope of futile dallying with a tense situation. There had been something ultimate in her fiancé's words and actions, which convinced her as she had never been convinced before.

"I will go away from you for a year, for two years if necessary," he had declared. "I shall never change, and at the end of the time I will return; but I can go on this way no longer."

"Give me just tonight," she had whispered, clasping him in her arms. "You are right. I have been weak and foolish. But, oh, the step we are taking, the great step—"

"I know—I know," he whispered, his anger if not his decision melting at the look of distress and the sweetness of her caress. "But, dear, the step has been already taken. When two people admit



that they love each other, as you and I have done, and there is no lawful impediment, the rest is merely accessory."

It was with a supreme effort that she kept herself from showing her dismay at the use of the luckless term, "lawful impediment."

After leaving her he called a cab and drove uptown to the dainty apartment with which he intended to surprise her. He had gathered there rare pieces of old furniture, a few charming paintings, luxurious furnishings of one kind and another, with no attempt at decorative perfection but with the finer perfection of good taste. Her bedroom and dressing room were marvels of luxury, equipped with every article dear to the feminine soul. The paneled walls of the English dining room echoed to his footfalls, and in the library he sat and visualized the evenings they would spend there together in the accord of mutual companionship with the world shut out.

That bitter world! And through the ocean of his love came, like a cold current for one irresistible moment, the knowledge of its cruel criticism—"a lace mender, an Italian immigrant, a girl without kin or fortune."

Well, he was to marry her, not the world. To them might always be unknown the wealth of her love, the aristocracy of her sentiment, her kindred of beautiful thoughts and actions. There were few women endowed with such physical attraction and such mental and moral gifts. Let the world stand at a distance and cavil. There would be moments when he might feel it as a pin prick, but what is a pin prick of irritation, when one has an eternity of bliss?

The next day the Contessa sent him a line. "I shall be ready a week from today. Mrs. Hageborn will accompany me. I would rather not see you in the meantime. You will understand this as you understand everything."

She mailed the note herself, standing for a moment after it had slipped from her fingers into the letter box with wondering eyes, trying to read the unreadable distances that enveloped her. A significant glance from a passer-by brought her to herself, and she rushed

madly across the street, up the steps, through the hall, and having reached her room, she threw herself gasping upon the couch and buried her face in its soft cushions.

The die was cast.

It is true she might have said, as he suggested, "Wait a year," but there would be the same problem to face at the end of that time and a year of loneliness and separation. No, no, a thousand times no!

The next morning she turned her face toward the morning sun as if it were something living and friendly. "Seven days," she murmured—"an eternity."

Every morning following her spirit seemed to grow lighter, as little by little the burden of doubt was removed. She spent her days in the shops buying simple additions to her wardrobe, never thinking of the gifts of clothes and jewels with which he intended soon to overwhelm her in revenge for her refusals to accept anything material from him until she was his wife.

Every morning her room was filled with exquisite flowers, the one gift she permitted him to make, and on her breakfast tray was the closely written letter with its sacred contents. She was walking now on a rose-strewn path, and she no longer peered over the edge and then shrank back fearful at what she did not see but what she imagined there.

The fifth day passed, and a great longing to see him overcame her. She hesitated at the telephone, the messenger call. No, she would not be so weak. How he would laugh at her! She had set the time herself, and she was finished with caprice. That was all very well in its place, but now she desired to convince him of her purpose and dignity.

One thing she could do. There was a favorite place in the park where they had met many times, a little path furnished with a single narrow seat under a spreading tree, concealed cleverly from the wider roadways and the procession of incessant passers-by. She would go there, and perhaps a mere chance, some vibrating thought, might bring him there, too. He could not laugh then at her changeableness; she need not con-

demn herself for the infidelity to the traditions of girlhood which had made this week one of solitary preparation.

She smiled at her feminine logic and arrayed herself in her best, her face gleaming with happiness and health.

Central Park was in its spring dress. There was the pale green of young branches; the wistaria hung in long, mauve clusters; some baby lambs freckled the meadow, and the children, with shrieks of joy, welcomed old acquaintances among the squirrels.

She had brought with her her favorite volume, the sonnets of Petrarch to Laura.

After a while she let the book fall in her lap and gave herself up to the delight of day dreaming. The blissful future! Already her past life was swallowed up in it as in the brilliant day is lost the nightmare of the preceding night.

How long she sat there she did not know. She heard no step, and when the man spoke she started up; then, glancing at the nearby road and the men and women within call, she resumed her place. In manner and speech the intruder was of an inferior class; a chauffeur, a valet perhaps, she judged him immediately at the first syllables spoken in a polite, even deferential way.

"You are Signorina Baptista?"

There was a slight foreign accent to the English words, but before its significance had made any impression on her mind he followed his inquiry by another query:

"You expected to meet Mr. Borland?"

She hesitated, but the glance, the attitude were merely those of the messenger desirous to prove that he has found the right person to whom to deliver his errand.

"Yes."

"He told me that I might find you here if you were not at Mrs. Hageborn's house."

"You have been to my lodgings? Who are you, and what do you want?"

"Mr. Borland—"

"Yes?"

"Has sent for you. He has had a slight accident."

The blood flew from her cheeks. She rose quickly; then, her limbs refusing to support her, she sank back to the bench.

"I assure you, signorina, it is nothing that need frighten you. He was weak and nervous, and the doctor said if you would come he would be all right."

She followed him immediately. There was an electric brougham drawn up at the roadway. "It is the doctor's," he explained, "and I am his assistant." He stepped aside for her to enter. She hesitated at the step, a sudden dread obsessing her, but fears had been her daily companions for so long that she felt toward them the familiarity of contempt. The man's words behind her, perfectly detached and indifferent, quieted the incipient alarm.

"I will tell you of the accident on the way. I think we had better not delay." He made a gesture to the driver, entered and closed the door.

They drove quietly along the park roadway for a few minutes, and the young man, without looking at her said simply:

"Mr. Borland's auto skidded. There was a collision with a tree. He was thrown out, and suffers from a slight concussion of the brain. He is himself now, but very feverish and excited. The doctor says he is in no danger, but must be kept quiet for a few days."

The fear of his safety removed, her thoughts flew to the marriage. It would have to be delayed. She shivered slightly. There was a feeling of disaster in the air.

They were in a deserted stretch of the park; for the moment there were no vehicles in sight, no pedestrians. Something of her thought may have been in her face, for the young man said, breaking the silence that had followed his statement:

"Pardon me, signorina, but we understand that you and Mr. Borland were to be married in a few days. I can assure you that—"

He had turned toward her and his face almost touched hers. In a second his fingers, long, supple, strong, grasped her throat, and he pressed against her, forcing her to the side of the brougham

and thus preventing any struggle. She was conscious that the curtain was drawn, that the speed of the vehicle had suddenly increased. She heard indistinctly:

"Not a word. You are helpless. Do not use your strength to no purpose."

Her face was smothered in a handkerchief. There was a queer, sickening perfume—then she lost consciousness.

When she came to herself she heard the splashing of water. Apparently she was upon some sort of vessel, which rocked and trembled at an approaching storm. In the dim light of a cabin she discerned the form of a woman, who at her gesture approached and gazed blankly in her eyes at her attempt at weak conversation. She, however, knew her duties and performed them conscientiously, doing many little things to add to the Contessa's comfort.

The door of the cabin was locked and the woman guarded the key.

She could scream, but to what avail? She realized that the mind that had planned this deed was too cunning not to have foreseen all such banal efforts.

She was in her husband's power. He had bided his moment well. Apparently she had been under surveillance for a long time. What was to be her lot—her future? Certainly a second escape was not in the scheme of its design.

It is well in America, with its wholesome air of commonplaceness, where life is lived practically without complexity, to believe that medieval methods no longer figure in modern existence; that women are free agents, and the crimes of husbands against them unknown except in courts where they are duly punished. But America and Italy! She knew that in many a lonely Italian villa women were as firmly incarcerated as if behind prison bars, caged for some known or fancied infidelity. She had heard whispers of deaths as mysterious as any of those the Borgias inflicted upon their victims.

She recalled nothing after the incident in the coupé. How she had been taken on board was a mystery, but that she was a prisoner, far out on the ocean, unable to communicate with anyone, with-

out a soul with whom to exchange a word, on her way back to Italy, was a pitiless truth.

The game was lost before she had fairly commenced to play. Her sin had found her out. A great lassitude of spirit came upon her. Her head ached with the constant tossing of the vessel, with her own tossings about between remorse, anger, pity and dread.

What would her lover think? Surely he must have faith behind such a great, overwhelming, generous affection as he had lavished upon her.

And if he believed that she was a victim of some strange circumstance, instead of the obvious explanation that she had played him false at the last moment, which her hesitations and reserves might easily make credible, what would he do—what *could* he do?

She dared not hope.

## IX

OLD Giuseppe looked up to see a stranger approaching. He did not look the second time, but continued the weaving of his shuttle and the scrutiny of the mended web.

The small pink stucco cottage was neat as a new pin outside. Giuseppe himself, rugged and grim, was still quite different from the wild-eyed fisherman of the previous year.

Just before he caught sight of Borland ascending the adjacent terrace, he had answered the voice that came from the living room:

"Father, some water, please." He had attended to the invalid's wants, stroking her face gently and rearranging her blanket. Perhaps she would get well. The doctor had spoken hopefully, and he repeated the words as she drank and then looked up into his face with grateful eyes.

Giuseppe took care of the cottage and of the invalid. In his spare minutes he fished and took his products to the markets, bringing back to her news of the countryside.

Once only had he met the Count. Giuseppe stood afar off, himself unseen,

glowering at him, his fingers clasped as if he felt a throat between them. It was the first time he had experienced a return of the old obsession, from which he had been free even during the heartsick hours when he had traced and found his daughter in the lodging house in Florence.

Only one thing restrained him from violence. Beatrice had agreed to come with him, to leave the Count without a word of farewell, if only her father would swear that there should be no desperate act.

"Promise me," she had said when he found her pale, emaciated, ill. "Promise me. I could not endure my life if that dread were hanging over it."

He had at that time told her of his meeting with the Contessa, after pledging her to secrecy. He suggested that they return to America when she had sufficient strength for the journey. At the idea Beatrice turned her face to the wall, sobs strangling her. "To think that I believed the dreadful things he said of her!"

Borland nodded to Giuseppe and asked if he might rest for a moment after his long climb. Giuseppe had managed to pick up a little English in his wandering, and Borland was a fair Italian scholar, so they managed to make each other understand.

Apparently the stranger was interested in looking at the view, an exquisite picture in the late afternoon. In reality, Borland was mentally comparing the landscape with the description the Contessa had given him many times of her home, always assuming herself to be the veritable Beatrice, daughter of the crazy Giuseppe, whose acts of violence had driven her from that peaceful spot.

The parallel was exact—the story-and-a-half cottage imbedded in the masses of pink geraniums, the walls covered with clambering white roses, the long hill where the mother was killed in the automobile accident, and far off the roofs of Casa Tanagra with the straggling village at their feet, green slopes here and there to an azure sea and a sky-line broken by snow-tipped peaks. Every feature had been faithfully painted.

Once while they sat chatting old Giuseppe excused himself. He was gone a long time, and when he returned said, falteringly, that his daughter was very ill and needed constant attention.

At these words Borland started to speak, and then checked himself. What could he say? He was sure now that he had reached the end of his journey, that the object of his search was not many yards away, but he must not arouse old Giuseppe's suspicions. The reason, too, that had prompted her flight might still endure, and she would in accordance with it refuse to see him. No, he must be diplomatic and wait, but the complications of the situation made him anxious.

At least she was there, too ill to disappear, and another day an opportunity might present itself for the announcement of his presence.

As he descended the hill he wondered if old Giuseppe would speak to his daughter of the stranger who had spent a half-hour with him in the twilight; and if he did, she would naturally demand a description which might make any further planning on his part unnecessary. But why had she gone as she did? Why was he restrained in this inexplicable way from dashing into the cottage and demanding to know the truth?

"Ill, very ill," old Giuseppe had said, and suddenly all lesser irritations were blotted out by a great anxiety. Could it be possible that she— Nonsense; it could not be that. She was tired with the strain of emotional experiences, exhausted, weak. The picture of her as he had seen her a few months before returned to him, vital, joyous, brimming over with health and happiness.

The next day at the same hour he walked leisurely up the hill, but old Giuseppe was not in front of the cottage; and the next day he was absent, and the next and the next. In the village he made a few acquaintances, and from these he learned that old Giuseppe and his daughter had been away a long time. The girl had disappeared and he had gone after and brought her back, the journey restoring his mental health. All

the details corresponded exactly with what Borland had already learned.

Everyone spoke well of Beatrice, of her industry, of her intelligence, of her devotion to her father; but what surprised him was that no one noted in her anything different or superior to the qualities shared by her *contadina* friends. He thought once of taking Padre Amboise into his confidence, but hesitated at the belief that in doing so he might be acting contrary to her wishes, those secret wishes which restrained his impatience, although at times he felt himself reaching the edge of his power over it.

A week passed and he had gained nothing. Once old Giuseppi passed him in the village street and returned his greeting absent-mindedly. Apparently he knew nothing of the relation between him and the sick girl.

Suddenly it occurred to him that he would go to Casa Tanagra and, if possible, see the Contessa of whom Beatrice had spoken so often, particularly when she had wished to explain the reason of her education so superior to that of most girls of her station and birth. Of course the Contessa would scent the romance. Was there ever a woman indifferent to the love affair of another?

He spoke to Padre Amboise one evening at the village inn. Was it possible for a stranger to gain ingress there? He had heard there was a wealth of interesting objects, books, manuscripts; and while not a *savant*, he liked to see what there was worth while in the places he visited.

The Padre was silent a long time. From his manner one might judge that he resented the idea of this intrusion. Finally he said drily:

"The Contessa is no longer at Casa Tanagra. She had gone to a holy sisterhood—it is said for life. She is a beautiful woman and a well known *religieuse*."

Help from this quarter was also denied. Inaction held him in a remorseless grip. He wanted to do something, but what—and how?

The day before he had taken Giuseppi a bouquet of exquisite flowers.

He had told him they were for the sick girl, with the good wishes of the stranger. Giuseppi had taken them, and apparently the attention had greatly pleased him. That very afternoon he had carried a basket of luscious fruit lined with dewy leaves, and again the father had expressed his appreciation with Italian volubility.

Why were the gifts received and the giver ignored? Why were his daily visits outside the cottage permitted and no word said, even in secret, that his discretion would be rewarded?

A week later he was trying to answer the same questions as he took his usual ramble up the terraced hill. Halfway to the summit he met Giuseppi, who was looking unusually worried, but at the sight of Borland an expression of relief crossed his face. He explained his anxiety. The old woman, a neighbor, who always sat with his daughter when he was forced to leave her, had been taken suddenly ill. If he did not get his fish he would not be able to buy the medicine and other necessities. He was afraid to leave her alone.

Giuseppi looked at him as if he expected that he would have a solution of the problem, and he could do no less than offer one. His heart beat rapidly, and he turned his face away so that Giuseppi, with his keen little eyes, should not see the perturbation struggling with relief that at last his opportunity had come.

"I will sit outside," he said finally, "and if she should want anything it would give me great pleasure to wait upon her. At any rate, you will feel more secure, and it will be no trouble for me. You know I like the view and the quiet."

He spoke indifferently, and Giuseppi, after a moment's wait, arguing the pros and cons with himself, thanked him gratefully. Beatrice would probably not disturb the visitor, and if she did the fresh water was within easy reach, and he would hurry back in an hour or two at the latest. He reentered the cottage, had a moment's conversation with the sick girl and, with a nod of adieu, continued his way to the beach.



Borland sat outside a long time, waiting for the invalid to call him. She knew that her father had gone. She must know that he was the stranger. Why this further delay, this final mystery? If it were not for her illness, concerning which Giuseppi's manner grew each day more serious and worried, he would take the bull by the horns, enter the cottage and insist upon the explanation due him.

He argued and debated with himself. Perhaps she wanted to see him but was afraid of his anger, whose importance her illness might have exaggerated. Afraid of his anger—when all he wanted was to help her in her distress!

The cottage was still as death, and outside only the drowsy hum of insects disturbed the silence of the Italian afternoon. He approached the door and drew aside the hanging vines of geraniums which covered the pink doorway. He called softly. There was no answer, and in a moment he pushed the door open and stepped inside.

A flood of sunlight came with him, and the muslin curtain of the window moved in the breeze, while a checkered pattern was thrown suddenly on the brick floor destitute of covering. There was a bed on one side of the room, and thrown upon it a thin figure whose back was toward him and whose hand trailed listlessly on the coverlet. It was a hand which struck him in that first quick glance as being strangely unknown, with its evidences of hard work and crude outlines. There was something strange, too, in the contour of the figure that the draperies of the bed did not deny. Had her illness made these changes? Impossible!

He took a step forward and coughed clumsily to warn the tenant of the room of his presence.

She turned slowly—a face absolutely unknown to him. The yellowish pallor, the strained eyes told the dread news. She spoke wearily.

"You are the stranger father told me about. You have been very kind. I hope I did not disturb you. I was trying to keep quiet."

He found the single chair and sat down awkwardly. He had to wait a

moment to regain his shattered composure.

"You did not disturb me. It would be a great pleasure if I could do something for you."

She closed her eyes for a moment, as if the efforts of looking and speaking were too much. He noted the drawn look, the blue veins that were startlingly close to the surface. Surely if one human being was utterly unlike another, this peasant girl, peasant in every gesture of her body, in every accent of her voice, was unlike the girl he had expected to find in the cottage room.

She opened her dark eyes after a moment and said:

"Would you get me some water?"

She pointed to the cup of pottery with splashes of color on its crackled surface, and he took and filled it at the well outside. After she had thanked him and drunk a little, she turned her face again to the wall, sensitive to the stranger's glance.

Without disturbing her by any word, he slipped outside and sat again in the shadows which were thrown by the tall cypress trees. He could not seem to think in any direct line. His head was dizzy, his eyes blurred. Only one emphatic truth was at the basis of his tattered thoughts, the dissimilarity between the woman he had just seen and the Beatrice he had hoped for.

And as this Beatrice was undoubtedly the daughter of old Giuseppi, who and where was the other Beatrice, the shadow woman who had eluded him, whom he had pursued so strenuously and whom he believed he had traced to her hiding place? All the old doubts and anxieties were again knocking at the door of his spirit.

The cottage of Giuseppi, old Giuseppi himself, all the descriptions and stories of the *contadina's* simple life had been etched in his brain by her graphic picturing and by his own memory. He knew his Italy, not merely as a tourist but from its books, its language, the visits he had made there, loving it supremely. As she had talked of it, he had pictured anew the places, and though there had been necessarily a cer-

tain vagueness of locality, he had known the geography of the country well enough to find it without too much exertion expended in false trails.

The girl he had just seen and talked to was the proper flower to spring from this peasant soil; but the other—who was she? Whence had she come? Whither had she flown? The threads of thought seemed like a gigantic cobweb, entangling him in their disorder and defying him to liberate himself.

While he sat there a young Italian boy, ragged and dirty but lithe as a young sapling, threw a ball in front of him and then chased it warily. The boy surveyed him with big brown eyes, taking in the details of face, figure and clothes. Finally he crept toward him, and with a sly look over his shoulder put a note in his hand.

The note was perfumed and bore a crest. It was signed "Beatrice," with a line struck through the name, following which was written "Contessa Eleanora Albergati." It was in a familiar handwriting and ran:

Your life is in danger every moment you remain. For my sake go at once.

He read it through twice, then crushed it in his hand. He called the boy and questioned him eagerly, but the lad either did not or would not understand. What he did understand was the gold coin, which he pocketed quickly, and in a moment he was out of sight.

From his vantage point Borland could see the roofs of Casa Tanagra rising above the ivy-covered walls and the ilex trees.

The Contessa. What a fool he had been! He lashed the grass with his stick. It was typical of him that in this moment he thought of the sufferings a woman born and bred like her must have endured, the humiliation, the hard work, the insults spoken and implied. In his own thoughts he had—

The old tangle was now clear. He had heard something of the Count's life. He had surmised more, with the clues given. She had fled, of course, from an impossible existence. He read now all the reserves, the withdrawals, the reticences and the final surrender. Had

she flown at the last, fearful of that surrender, or had she been pursued and brought back to Casa Tanagra? He could not help hoping that it was this, and her incarceration would seem to make the explanation plausible.

In either case she was his, and he would have her. His Anglo-Saxon temperament seemed all at once imbued with the Latin spirit. Hot flames of love and longing swept over him. Leave her to fight the battle of the Count's demands and cruelty? Go away because the Count had threatened? Did she know him so little as that? She loved him and he loved her—that was all that really counted. It was a belief that had led him overseas. It was a belief that had kept him from recklessness when others doubted. It was a belief that made his resolution iron-bound to wait in the danger she feared, in the inaction he loathed, until the moment came when he could be of use to her.

That night he looked out of the window of the inn at the dark mass of shadows that showed the turrets of Casa Tanagra. Behind one of them she was imprisoned, thinking of his danger as he was of hers, and there was no way by which he could relieve her anxiety. He paced restlessly up and down. "One might as well be in the Middle Ages," he thought bitterly, maddened at his own inability.

The door opened without a knock, and Giuseppe stood with his back against it.

"Your daughter—" inquired Borland. His first thought was that the girl was dying and her father had come to him for help. They had talked together a great deal of late, and the idea was not preposterous.

Giuseppe shook his head. He took a step forward. "Beatrice has just fallen asleep. I couldn't come before." The old man's eyes gleamed with a strange light; his sinewy hands writhed one within the other.

Borland remembered the stories told of Giuseppe's strange illness, the excuse the fictitious daughter had given for running away—the reason why the real one had fled, so had repeated the village

gossipers. What had he, young and vigorous, to fear from this old man? He was ashamed at the moment of such a recollection.

"What is it, Giuseppi?" he asked quietly.

Giuseppi looked over his shoulder with the familiar Latin gesture, as if in the shadows of the room he feared a treacherous hand.

"She has sent me to warn you again. The Count knows why you are here. He intends to insult you. You will have to fight him. He knows the rapier and the pistol as the Italian gentlemen know them and the American do not."

Borland's face brightened. "You are sure of this? How do you know?"

"The Count has told her you will never leave the village alive. He learned of the note she sent you this afternoon."

Giuseppi, in his agitation, sat on the edge of the bed.

"I am the only one in the village who knows of the Contessa's return. I was allowed to see her, to take a message from my dying daughter."

The old man's face was drawn in agony as he voiced his coming sorrow, now but a matter of a few days, so the doctor had said.

In a low, hurried tone he related his meeting with the Contessa in New York. He told the shameful truth of his daughter's disappearance. He ended his recital abruptly.

"She begs you to avoid the Count for her sake, and to go—to go at once—to-night if possible."

Borland nodded absently. How like a woman! To avoid the Count, when the one thing he wanted was to meet him face to face!

He had all the American's dislike for dueling. He believed it a futile way of settling difficulties. The fists and the law were his redress, the one for the man of quick passions, the other for the possessor of the phlegmatic temperament.

A duel—with a well known exponent of its efficacy! Tomorrow, perhaps, there would be a spoken word, a blow across the face in a café brawl. Well, so be it. Fate had spoken.

## X

A WEEK passed, unmarked by any event except the gradual dissolution of Beatrice. Every day she grew more spiritlike and the end was very apparent. She was used now to the attentions of Borland, who assisted Giuseppi in taking care of her, a task which the old man jealously guarded, leaving her only when his absence was necessary.

Little by little, with words and signs, she told Borland of her life with the Count, the few weeks of happiness, the quick wearying and, finally, the active cruelty. Sometimes she was delirious, and in a state of semi-consciousness uttered agonized prayers to the Virgin, asking forgiveness for her sin against the Contessa and recalling the days of her unsullied youth. This sin against the Contessa weighed heaviest on her conscience, even after the priest had granted her absolution and the Contessa herself had sent a message of forgiveness.

Over and over Borland listened to the praises of the woman he loved, and at such times his attentions unconsciously redoubled; he was careful that no sounds disturbed the quiet, that the sunlight did not pursue its errant way too closely, that the temperature of the room was accurately adjusted.

Giuseppi brought the village gossip, gleaned as he mended his nets and in his walks to and fro. It was learned that the Contessa had returned. It was stated that her love for the Count had finally triumphed, and, indifferent at last to his profligate life, she had resumed her place in the world at his side. It was not known that she was imprisoned, seeing no one, seen by none.

Borland started several times to write to his sister the story of his quest, but after several futile attempts he gave it up. He was unable to push the pen across the blank sheets. How could one write a story that one was living—and whose ending might be, probably would be, a tragedy? It would be learned soon enough, as all tragedies are, however long delayed the sequel may seem to the onlooker.

He heaped upon the invalid luxuries

of all kinds, and would have relieved Giuseppe of all expenses, but the old man was implacable on this point; flowers, fruit, soft cushions, yes—but money, no.

In the last days the couch was wheeled to the window, where the dying girl could look out on the blue waters with their opalescent shading, at the azure sky deepening here and there into violet, gashed by snow-topped mountains. As she gradually sank her speech failed, and finally she could thank Borland only with grateful glances, which altered into adoring looks as her eyes met those of her father.

The last moments were peaceful, and Giuseppe bore his affliction without any return to the old time cerebral excitement, as a child might a bereavement which he has been taught is in the natural order of events.

Borland, not wishing to arouse any undue attention from the villagers, did not attend the funeral at the church nor follow the body to the grave, but his wreath of white roses was laid upon the coffin, and he was at the cottage to greet Giuseppe on his return. He stayed with him until the old man dropped into a deep, dreamless sleep; then he went outside and sat in his favorite corner in the shadow of the ilex trees. The world was bathed in moonlight. He remained a long time thinking of the past, of the future.

Every night after this he climbed the hill and sat with Giuseppe, smoking his pipe and listening to the story of Beatrice's girlhood—not totally lacking in interest itself, doubly so that it was more or less entangled with that of the Contessa.

What he did not know was that Giuseppe always followed him on his return and saw him safely sheltered behind the inn's hospitable doors.

It was a week after Beatrice's funeral when, having followed his usual programme, he was startled just as he commenced his preparations for bed by hearing a slight tap at the door.

He opened it. There was the young boy who had brought him the note from the Contessa.

As before, he handed him, warily, the perfumed missive, waiting for him to read it, standing first on one foot then on the other. There was but a single word in the familiar handwriting—"Come."

Borland did not hesitate a moment. If there was danger in the meeting, well and good. She would not have sent for him except in need. What that need was he did not dare conjecture, and if the path led to death, at least there would be the meeting first. He was quite modern in his attitude toward the hereafter; all he wanted was to die when his time came like a man, as he believed he had lived.

He took out his revolver, looked at it a moment, then shut it again in the drawer. He would not risk its presence. It would do him little good if he was going to be shot in the back.

He questioned the boy, who, as before, presented a blank face to his words.

He followed him through a side door of the inn, their departure unnoted, as had been the boy's stealthy coming.

They walked hurriedly down the village street, keeping in the shadows, for the moon was full and the road was silver bright. The cypress trees were like a row of tall sentinels in this light, and there was a heavy fragrance of roadside flowers. Once an automobile went scurrying by, the only sign of life encountered upon the road. A bird sang in the woods nearby, and far, far away came the echo of a Neapolitan barcarolle. Had such a night been chosen for a tragedy?

The grounds of Casa Tanagra were framed in gloom, but the gate was easily seen, and they entered.

The boy whistled, a bird's throaty call, and from behind a clump of syringas came the fat, oily body of Dr. Delmonte, the Count's constant attendant, whom Borland had met several times.

The physician greeted Borland as if he were an honored and expected guest. His "This way, I pray you," might have been the invitation to a midnight supper.

The urchin had disappeared, and Borland's heart stood still with fear, not the

physical one of the coward but fear that he might not see the woman he loved before the curtain was rung down; yet he followed his guide nonchalantly. It was too late to retreat if he had wished it, which he did not. He had grown more than ever restless of inaction—the man's tragedy.

That no good was intended he felt positive. He realized that he had been trapped, and the Contessa had been made an accomplice. How, he might never learn.

Well, if they did not meet, she would know at least that he had obeyed unhesitatingly her last command. It might be that he took the situation too seriously. It might be that he was being sent for to exact from him a promise that he would leave the country. He gave a low whistle at the thought. The doctor admonished him to silence.

"It is the wish of the Contessa that you do nothing to compromise her with the household at this midnight visit."

Compromise the Contessa! It was scarcely likely, with her present surveillance. He appreciated the full subtlety of the worldly sentiment, however, and his ejaculation was not repeated.

They continued their way along the terraces, through winding paths, getting deeper and deeper into seclusion. They finally came to a balcony, to which they climbed by a winding stairway, the balustrades fragrant with honeysuckle. The Italian went ahead and tapped at the casing. In a second the long French windows were thrown open.

They entered a *salon* illuminated by candles, whose radiance was reflected by prisms and mirrors. In the soft light the Contessa stood, her eyes deeply circled as if she had been weeping bitterly, her expression one of mingled fear and joy. She was pale and thin. Her gown, an exquisite web of lace, was caught about her waist with a jeweled girdle, and precious stones gleamed on her hands and arms, in accordance with the Count's demands. It was the first time Borland had seen her in the frame he dreamed at one time would be his privilege to furnish. She seemed to have

stepped from the canvas of an Old Master.

The doctor had disappeared.

All the force of a man's passion, left to eat into Borland's solitary soul, was revived. He rushed toward her.

She warned him back with a horror-struck gesture.

She twice tried to speak, and failed. He thought she was going to faint, and, in spite of her injunction, moved toward her as if he would take her in his arms.

She made a tremendous effort to repel him, and he regained his own shattered poise.

"Please do not suffer for me. I am content. I have seen you."

As he surmised, her fear was for him, and his quiet words stilled her nervous dread.

Finally she spoke, as quietly as he.

"Behind that door the Count and the doctor are standing. They solemnly promised if I would see you here without the knowledge of the household for the last time, and demand that you return to America in order to avoid scandal, they would permit you to go in safety; and, in time, the Count would use his influence at Rome to obtain a divorce.

"I doubted at first, naturally, but at length constant reiterations wore down my suspicions. After all, it was the only sensible way to end the situation, and though the Count has never given me reason to believe his impulses or actions would ever be governed by that inspiration, the wish was father to the desire. I believed that I could save us both by a little patience.

"I found out tonight, when it was too late to warn you, that he had lied to me again, as he has always lied.

"In a few minutes you will go, not to America and to safety—" She stopped, wringing her hands impotently.

"He is going to give you what he calls a chance for your life, that will appease the thing, the noisome thing, he calls his honor when he thinks of it, if he ever does, in the future. You have no chance against him. His aim is as sure as his sense of right and wrong is wide of the mark.



"All his plans are well laid. You were seen prowling about the grounds. The Count, thinking you were a poacher, fired a shot. He will explain all at great length to the authorities, and will blame himself severely for the quick action a man takes naturally in protecting his own. The midnight walk with his friend the doctor will help to shut off inquiry.

"They have left no weak place in their scheme. They have even determined to sully your reputation. There will be a rumor set afloat, how and where no one knows. You had been seen many times in company with one of the maids at Casa Tanagra; had met her, in fact, daily at Beatrice's bedside, and had attempted a rendezvous here."

Facing the danger he had already surmised, and that she now clearly emphasized, he still could not help thinking how beautiful she was.

Why wait? Any moment might be his last. Careless of the lynx eyes on the other side of the door, between whose edge and the lintel a thin thread of light argued that they were seen and heard, he took a quick step forward, and quieting her gesture of fright and resistance, took her in his arms and kissed her as a man kisses a woman once in his life—kissed her passionately on her hair, her cheeks, her lips.

The door creaked. The Count, pale as death, his eyes aflame with hate, stood suddenly between them.

"It is perhaps rude to interrupt Signor Borland in such a pretty pastime, but there are certain *convenances* to be observed. I understand you do not recognize them in America, where men marry other men's wives."

Borland answered him, his syllables clear cut and sharp as knives:

"I understand from this lady, whom the law calls your wife, who, in spite of this loathsome handicap, has won my love and respect, that your trap has succeeded. I congratulate you. As you say, in America gentlemen have a different code. It would be useless to endeavor to make you understand it. Briefly, we do not drag the name of the woman whose honor is in our keeping

through the mud of profligacy. We do not lie to men to take them at a disadvantage. We do not use the cloak of the church to hide our villainies. We do not betray and desert innocent peasant girls. We do not—

"But we are delaying. What do you want of me? I am here, unarmed, at your—shall I say mercy?"

The Count stood speechless with rage. Borland turned to the Contessa.

"Remember this: your love has paid me for all. If I lose my life, my last words are that I would go through it all again for what I have won—for that last kiss of farewell."

His solemnity was so great that the Contessa rose to meet it, overcoming the feminine weakness that threatened her composure.

"I do not believe one has a right to take one's life except in extreme cases. If you do not return I shall devote my years to your memory, as I believe you would approve. But I hold it a duty to free my soul from my body if that man attempts to take advantage of the privileges accorded him by law."

She spoke loftily, and her words conveyed not the emotion of a spent moment but the intention of a long premeditated resolve.

The Count made a gesture to the doctor, who laid his hand on Borland's shoulder and whispered:

"We are ready."

Borland looked from one to the other. What good a momentary resistance? If he should make it, he would be shot there in the Contessa's private apartment, discovered, so the story would go, by the outraged husband, who had instantly avenged his honor.

He gave a last long look at the Contessa. Of what good were words in such a crisis? Then the procession of three, the physician first, followed by Borland, the Count bringing up the rear, left the room, the latter closing the door softly after them on the picture of the Contessa flung prostrate on the floor.

No word was spoken. They passed through bits of forestry, through zigzag paths, by rectangles of formal garden-  
ing. A broken statue gleamed in the

moonlight; the blots of trees were formless as death itself. An eerie feeling took possession of Borland; a great lassitude overcame him suddenly, as if his bones had melted. The strain of the last hour had been tremendous and he was conscious of its reaction.

The Count and the doctor, one on either side, chatted amiably in a low tone. Once the Count made a remark, at which the other chuckled audibly.

Finally they reached Clematis Cottage, from which the Contessa had, a long time before, emerged, clothed like a peasant girl, to seek her fortune in the New World. The Count fumbled among the vines, found the key, which he fitted to the lock, and after two or three abortive attempts the door slowly opened. He waved Borland inside, but the latter refused curtly. If he was to be put away, he preferred the open.

"You are afraid," whispered the Count.

"Not afraid, but I do not care to go unless I am told the reason."

"I want to give you the chance a gentleman gives—the man who has wronged him. You can rest here until dawn. We cannot trust the moonlight; a lantern might arouse suspicion. When the dawn breaks we will settle our little difficulty in the time-honored way for which civilization, even the American variety, offers no fitting compromise."

For the first time Borland recognized something compelling in the other man's personality, and, after a short conflict with himself, realizing the justice of the words, he entered the cottage. The doctor, close to his shoulder, lighted a candle, pointed to a couch in the corner of the inner room, and stepped aside with a gracious manner to allow Borland to enter.

"If you wish to rest—" he suggested to Borland

"I do not care to rest," answered Borland, "but I shall be glad to spend the hours in seclusion."

"As you wish," the Count said. "At sunrise we will take the pistols. I do not think there will be any need of seconds. I have dispensed with one."

Borland strode into the inner room.

There was no door, and the window for a long time resisted his efforts to open it. Finally it yielded, and he looked out at the sky now overcast with clouds. He saw only formless shadows and mysteries of dim perspectives. It was useless for him to attempt escape. Near him the Count sat with his ears keyed to the slightest sound of departure, and in a short time the other man's deep breathing broke the tense stillness of the outer room.

He carefully rehearsed the events of the last few days to see that he had left no broken threads for others to tie, in case the more than expected happened. He did not intend, in a morbid moment, to fire in the air. He had been forced into the duel. So long as the Count lived his own life would be in danger, but he faced grimly the fact of the Count's well known reputation as a marksman and his own halfway expertness.

Since the Contessa's initial warning he had written his sister a letter, which was signed and sealed and put away among his effects. In it he had related briefly the events of his journey and its possible fatal ending. In case the worst happened, he had begged that the affair be allowed to die decently, without legal or other investigation, without hue and cry of gossip mongers.

What the world would always believe were the surface facts, as related to him a few minutes before: that he had, with her connivance, attempted to go through the form of a marriage ceremony with another man's wife. The ethical explanation of this, its extenuating circumstances, would not interest them for a moment. The Count, with church and state on his side, would be a bitter enemy to fight. It would be better, for all their sakes, to let the matter rest.

He begged her to do what she could in the future for the Contessa, caught like a butterfly on a wheel. A word of sisterly affection, of sympathy might reach her—how he did not know.

The other alternative was that he might kill the Count. He actually had not thought of that. If he had the luck to rid the earth of such carrion, well. The hope for a moment thrilled him.

He had arranged that old Giuseppe should be paid a pension for life, and the rest of his fortune was to be equally divided between his sister and the Contessa—his sweetheart. He had always loved that old-fashioned word, and, in spite of the waiting husband in the other room, he used it now in his thought.

Finally, the reaction of overstrained nerves overcame him. His head fell forward on the wooden sill. He slept soundly.

In spite of his hatred, the Count could not prevent an exclamation of quickly suppressed admiration when in the first faint rays of dawn he looked into the small room and saw Borland sleeping like a child.

"These Americans!" he said, with a shrug of his shoulders, to his companion. "Well, it is not much to lose, a future spent in their country. Perhaps that is the reason they accept the going away from it so philosophically."

But there was no cynicism when he touched Borland on the shoulder.

"Come," he said, briefly; "there is no time to lose."

Borland shook himself slowly into consciousness. He looked for a moment inquiringly at the two men, trying to piece together the episodes of the past few hours. He listened to the sighing of the wind in the ilex trees, to the first faint call of desolate birds, like himself half asleep. Then he rose to his feet and said, suddenly wide awake:

"I am ready."

They walked into the outer room. There was a mound of cigarette ashes on the table, which showed how the Count had spent the hours; beside it were two loaded pistols. The Count waved a careless hand.

"Take your choice," he murmured. "They are the same make and caliber, as you will see. They are your own manufacture. The Americans are—good mechanics."

"It makes no difference to me," replied the other coolly. "I am sure they are equally matched. You Italians are too clever to stack the cards—when they are in sight."

The Count seized the nearest weapon

and handed it to his opponent, who examined it with attention, the care a man displays who, in a supreme moment, takes no chances of accident.

The Count took the other and looked at it with the same intent scrutiny. The doctor blew out the flickering candle, and the trio passed out in the same order they had entered, the Count locking the door and replacing the key in its accustomed niche. A cool breeze brushed their faces; the freshness of the dawn was in the air.

There was but one matinal song, that of a roisterer returning to his nest, still imbued with the joy of living. Borland turned in its direction and listened intently to the exquisite melody pouring from the fluffy throat of the hidden songster. Perhaps it would be the last time. Well, it was good to have one's flame of life, if need be, snuffed out here in the morning dew, with the bird's song in one's ear and about one the perfume of the flowers she knew and loved.

The Count and the physician exchanged low remarks concerning an evening jaunt. He set his lips firmly. The evening—where would he be? "What next?" he asked, interrupting their chatter.

The Count pointed affably to the green oval at the rear of Clematis Cottage, its periphery bounded by tall sentinel cypresses and a high crumbling wall. In a niche of this wall a single poppy bloomed. It was like a splash of blood against the gray surface.

The doctor measured off the space, and when this had been accomplished the two looked to Borland for approval.

The Count spoke. "Do you want to mark, or shall I? Or will you trust it to Dr. Delmonte?"

"It is a matter of indifference."

"Very well. When Dr. Delmonte says three, we will both fire. I do not think there need be more than one shot."

Borland did not look about, but was conscious that the doctor had turned his back and that his hands were held rigidly in front of him.

He raised his pistol, the gesture agreeing with that of the Count's. They had

by mutual consent omitted the conventional preliminaries.

They stood for what seemed an hour. Borland had his thoughts well under control: they did not wander from the gleaming barrel of the opponent's weapon.

The physician counted, "One." The voice was low, distinct, without a tremor.

"Two." The interval seemed longer than eternity itself. Would he never speak again? Would the "Three" never be uttered?

While they were waiting for it, a shot rang out, followed by another quickly. They came directly behind the Count, who suddenly toppled over, face down, and after a long convulsive movement, like that of a worm crushed by a decisive heel, lay motionless.

The shots and the physician's third numeral came together. The moment he had uttered it the latter turned toward the spot where Borland was standing. He expected to see—not what he did see—Borland standing with startled eyes, looking at his enemy prone before him in the dew wet grass. He had presence of mind enough to remove his hand from the trigger of his revolver and to guard it zealously.

"It is all over," said the doctor, as he turned the body over, gazing at the staring gaze, the limp hand from which the pistol had fallen.

Borland gasped. "Who did it?"

"Who did it?" repeated the other, in the same oily, sarcastic tone he had used in his talk with the Count. He gazed reflectively at Borland's weapon.

Borland opened the chambers and showed him the ammunition still intact. His scorn at the doctor's insinuation found vent in the expletives he had controlled so long.

The latter soothed him gently. To hear him, one might have thought him the friend of the living rather than of the dead. After all, the Count was gone and the Contessa was in authority. If inquiries were made and the truth known his own part in the affair might not seem creditable, now that his protector was dead.

"Go," he said authoritatively to Bor-

land, "for her sake. No one can connect you with the Count's death. The body will be found by me later in my early morning walk which I always take when I stay at Casa Tanagra. It will be natural to suppose it the work of some wandering poacher. It is a theory that I will suggest. Go."

## XI

THE Contessa was unconscious for many hours. The long strain at last told, and nature came to her relief. When the blackness wore away she saw Dr. Delmonte leaning over her. There was an odor of brandy in the air and, mingled with it, the fragrance of the honeysuckle at the window.

She looked at the face before her for a moment, then asked quietly:

"It is all over?"

The doctor nodded.

"He is—murdered?"

The other did not pretend to misunderstand. "He has been saved by a miracle."

"Saved!" She rose to her feet in her excitement. Her face flushed, then grew pale. "The—Count—"

"Is dead. He died without pain."

Her mind traveled quickly. "He—has escaped?"

"He did not need to. He was not responsible. The Count was killed by the chance shot of a poacher. The ways of heaven are indeed mysterious."

"Where is—the body?"

"Below in the grand hall. I said that I would bring you. I am accustomed to an early morning stroll when I spend the night at Casa Tanagra, and this morning, following my usual habit, I walked in the garden—and found him. You understand?"

She nodded. "There is no one but the boy who took the message who is aware that Signor Borland was here last night. He will never speak of that occurrence. He is attached to me and afraid."

"He is a brave man, this Signor Borland," said the doctor slowly. He helped the Countess steady her faltering foot-

steps. As they reached the door he hesitated a moment and placed his long sinewy fingers on her trembling wrist.

"Contessa, you need my help. I will give it to you—and him. Trust me."

She had always believed Dr. Delmonte less wicked than weak, dominated by the cruel, unrelenting force of an evil personality. She had been able to resist it only by flight, and he was, after all, only one among many whose lives the dead man in the hall below had tainted.

She placed her hand in his in token of her forgiveness. Together they made their way to the main hall. The body of the Count was on a stretcher, with an old army blanket taken from the cottage thrown over it. She knelt down and hid her face in the rough blanket. When she looked up again she was alone.

At about the same hour, Borland was awakened from a deep sleep by a tap at his door. He opened it, to find old Giuseppi there, wild-eyed, disheveled, with one hand concealed in the full sleeve of his blouse. He drew it out shaking with fear, and showed the revolver with which he had killed Count Albergati.

"I have followed you for days," he said in a low, half-articulate voice—"for days. Every time you went out alone from the inn, every time you left me at night and went down the hill, I have watched. I was there last night when you were called away by the boy. I got into the grounds of Casa Tanagra through the open place in the wall. I knew that the long waiting was almost over, that the Count was ready for his revenge, as I was for mine. I saw you and Dr. Delmonte and the Count go into the cottage."

Giuseppi stopped to get his breath. Borland had closed the door and stood with one hand on the old man's shoulder. The touch of this had a quieting effect.

"I—I fired the shots. I was afraid I was too late—that awful moment—for a branch got in my way." His voice broke at the recollection.

Borland went to his traveling bag, took out his whiskey flask, poured out a good portion of the liquid and made Giuseppi swallow it.

"Don't be afraid," he said, as the color came slowly back to the withered cheeks and the hands stopped their violent trembling. "You've done the best thing you ever did in your life. You'll have a dispensation for this, if money and influence can get it. Meanwhile you're my charge. I'll protect you."

The old man clutched his sleeve and looked at him with the expression of a child depending on a more vigorous strength than his own to drag him from a morass.

"I promised Beatrice I wouldn't touch him, and I didn't. I met him, again and again, and didn't spring at him, didn't take his throat in my hands and wring his life out, as I wanted to do. I passed the time of day with him once, and once he gave me a gold piece to buy something for my sick daughter. I spat on it and threw it in the hedge after he had gone by. I played my part because Beatrice wished it, but always there was hatred, hatred, hatred in my heart. It's gone now, and I'm happy. God forgive me for saying so!"

Borland watched him closely. Was the old time violence going to return? Would his character become changed again?

Yes, but in a different way. After the history of the night had been told a look of peace stole into the old man's face. He yielded to Borland's attentions without protest.

No one in the village had ever suspected the place of Beatrice's exile; no one ever connected the Count with her disappearance, or old Giuseppi with his death. The presence of Borland at the inn had become now such a matter of course that he, too, escaped even the usual doubt that entangles every stranger in a place where an unusual happening has occurred.

The statement of Dr. Delmonte that after he had said good night to the Count the latter had continued his walk to finish his cigar and had probably been surprised by the unwary shots of a prowler was accepted as probable and satisfying, and the Count was gathered to his fathers with less than the usual nine



days' wonder. It was soon rumored, with the same accuracy of perception, that the Contessa would return to the holy sisterhood where she had been so long immured, and from which her deep devotion to the Count had recalled her.

While these rumors were going about, Dr. Delmonte was delivering in person the daily missive that Borland sent to Casa Tanagra. In this note, as in the preceding ones, Borland poured out his soul. There was nothing, no one to keep them apart. Why did she still keep him at a distance? Why could his long patience not be rewarded?

She sent the same answer by the same messenger. He must wait. He must guard their interests with further patience as he had with extreme bravery. She knew her people. They did not suspect, it is true, but a chance word, an unwise look, and the Italian dogs of suspicion, of retribution, of revenge would be unleashed in a moment.

So the hours melted into days and the days into weeks. Borland and Giuseppi went fishing and sat silent together.

One evening the doctor met him, as if by chance, in the village street. He greeted him, then touched him on the arm and led him down a side path toward Casa Tanagra. Through the same gateway, by the same winding paths, they reached at length the balcony obscure in its masses of morning glory and honeysuckle vines. The doctor quietly slipped away. A French window opened slowly and Borland was in the presence of the woman he loved.

After the first half-hour, they discussed their future plans. Borland pleaded in vain for the mitigation of the sentence of exile. But sorrow had taught them both the lesson of self-control, and he yielded to her wish.

They had approached perilously near a great sin and had been saved from it. To snatch their joy now too hungrily would take from the penance that the ethical law demanded. Casa Tanagra would go to the Count's heir, a distant cousin, but her own property, left her at the death of the Marchesa del Vambrino, since her return, would need her atten-

tion for a time until the legal complications were adjusted.

She would go, as soon as this was accomplished, to her own people in England. There she would remain until Borland came for her, and in the English chapel, where her cousins had each in turn been married, surrounded by the influences that had made her stay there the one pure, sweet spot in her stormy life, they would become man and wife. What she did not confess was the subconscious desire to put her head upon her aunt's shoulder, and in that old time resting place confess all the sin, the repentance, the hope. She had dreamed once, futilely, that the devotion of her uncle and aunt would be duplicated in her own married life. She had dreamed this in the ignorance of youth; now, with experience and discipline as inspiration, she dreamed it again.

So they said farewell.

It was considered odd in the village that the stranger should care to take old Giuseppi to America with him as valet. There were plenty of younger men who would have been glad of the opportunity, but all Americans were queer, he queerest of all, not apparently ill and in search of the curative qualities of the soft Italian climate but just content to moon about, to go fishing and to sit on the brow of the hill with Giuseppi. It was not true what they said of the Americans, men unhappy in idleness; the Italians were the real workers of the world.

"Complications!" repeated Mr. Laurence sarcastically, when Borland used the word to explain his prolonged absence. "Complications, in such a case, usually means a husband."

"There was a husband," said Borland.

"Was?"

"He was shot while I was there—and killed."

Borland looked younger, handsomer, more buoyant than ever when he returned. Happiness shone in his face and thrilled his voice. His sense of humor had recuperated, and he had commenced his recital, anticipating with delight the discomfiture of his brother-in-law when

the crisis of the story was reached and the identity of the "ambitious lace mender," as Mr. Laurence had always denominated the former member of his household, was made known.

But the remembrance was too keen. He could not keep up the comedy strain with which he commenced his story. He had to tell it in clear cut words chiseled in the recesses of his soul.

When he had finished his sister came to him, threw her arms about his neck and sobbed aloud.

"To think that you were so near death, and we did not know!"

Mr. Laurence gave a long whistle of surprise and dismay. "The Countess Albergati! And we treated her like a servant."

"You did," answered his wife, irritation overcoming her grief.

"I did. I admit it. I shall have an humble apology to make when I see her."

"She is fine enough," Borland replied, "to make you feel perfectly at ease and really to forget as well as forgive."

Six months later, without ostentation, the Contessa Eleono a Albergati became the wife of Ned Borland, in the church in the little English town, and a week after, from the prow of the incoming steamer, watched the land of her beloved America rise from the surrounding mists.

"It is the country of strength, of protection, of hope," she whispered, her hand within her husband's.

"It is our country," he replied.



## MY LADY PASSES

By Shaemas O'Sheel

A BREATH of fragrance wafted by—  
 It is my Lady!  
 Like a bit of the glad blue sky,  
 Through sullen streets and shady,  
 She glances by,  
 My Lady!  
 Though from my window I but see  
 Her passage brief,  
 The rhythm of the world thrills into me,  
 Cloud rhythm and wave rhythm and dancing leaf!



HE—Why do you want to vote?  
 SHE—Why, it would be too cute for anything.



A BOLD front may be all right, but it requires a backbone to make it effective.

# THE SONG THRUSH

By Julian Hawthorne

VIRGINAL, opaline,  
Mystic obscurity  
Of the dim dawn hush  
Far in the forest,  
Filling the magical  
Silence with glorious  
Splendor of melody,  
Heard I the Song Thrush  
Pour on the holiness  
Rapturous clusters  
Of radiant song flowers,  
Sounds that were perfumes;  
Odorous madness  
Joyously burgeoning,  
Shrilling and thrilling  
To my heart's inmost;  
Music that melted  
From rubies and amethysts,  
Sweeter than fragrance  
Of springtime arbutus,  
Gorgeous with purple  
Of youth in its passion,  
Triumphing in golden  
Floods of love cadences;  
Passion of primal  
Love, still victorious,  
Song of the morning,  
Crimson and azure;  
Song that aforetime,  
In Golden Ages,  
Wakened the nymphs,  
The fauns and the satyrs—  
Roused them from slumber  
On mosses and violets—  
Nymphs, their ivory limbs  
Sweetly bestirring,  
Lithe fauns with sunned shoulders,  
Hairy-thighed satyrs,  
Wakening, murmured:  
"Eros, the Love God,  
Calls—let us worship him!"  
Then, while the caroling

## THE SMART SET

Warbled above them,  
 Wood gods and goddesses  
 Mingled in rapture  
 Of amorous worship,  
 Nectar of clover  
 And sweetfern distilling,  
 Till the pure ecstasy  
 Of love's delirium  
 Throbbled in their heartstrings,  
 Ravished their senses,  
 And the enamoured ones  
 Swoomed in their blissfulness,  
 While the sweet singing  
 Died into silence!



## PAWNEE PROVERBS

By L. K. Devendorf

THE best horse goes back to the herd; the lame one comes back to the camp.

The largest deer is killed in the tepee.

The dog that barks loudest is the last in the chase.

The sweetest grass is always across the deepest river.

The homeliest squaw has the softest tongue.

He who talks with women hears all men are chiefs but himself.

The polecat hunts alone.

Borrow from your enemies, lend to your friends—then no one is cheated.



HE—Won't you give me just a little kiss?  
 SHE—Oh, I don't believe in kissing a little bit.

## CONNORS OF THE CAMERA COHORT

By Robert Emmet MacAlarney

"THESE artichoke hearts are awfully good, Teddy," said the girl in blue, facing young Theodore Tuttle across the cloth of the corner table. "But"—and she consulted a ridiculously tiny wrist watch, with more gem setting than dial in evidence—"it is almost two now. And if we don't hurry we can't get it done before they find out about it. They might be able to stop us, and— Well, Teddy, for goodness sake, why don't you say something?"

Theodore Tuttle, heir to the Tuttle tree of family, with the ducats and domiciles appertaining thereunto, drummed vacantly upon the linen, tinkled his fork the least bit upon the china plate in front of him and remarked, for lack of something more inspired: "Well, here we are, Alice. Here we are."

"Theodore!"

If one may be said ever to scream in a whisper, that was indubitably a girl-in-bluish scream which smote Teddy Tuttle's conscience-stricken hearing. But there was no note of indecision in the moment which followed, as the girl touched her luncheon companion's arm and issued General Order No. 1, the first of a long succession of General Orders which young Tuttle was eagerly looking forward to obeying. Else why the very heavy but very plain circlet which he had with him, tucked into his waistcoat pocket?

General Order No. 1 was: "You planned this. It was your idea, not waiting until we had brought your father and my mother around. And now you've got to see it through.

You've got to. What are men for if not to see things through?"

"Don't be afraid, Alice," faltered the Tuttle hope and heir, who had winced at mention of his father. "I'll straighten it all out. Didn't we get through that marriage license business all right? If it hadn't been for a bit of hard luck, they wouldn't be out there now."

"They" referred to three or four keen-looking young men lounging at ease on the leather benches in the lobby, which the lunchers at the corner table could scan. These young men were at ease; they were living a life of constant learning to be at ease, anywhere and everywhere. But they were none the less persistently alive to what the corner table was doing. And, although a careless stroller through "Peacock Alley" would not have divined it, this same group was the scouting detail thrust out by an enemy that unfailingly attacks folks who do things as soon as they have done them, an enemy that already had thrown a cordon about the huge building.

The house detectives and the hotel manager, even the hotel proprietor, knew that siege had been declared, even if the throng in the corridor was unenlightened. Your hotel proprietor, at such a time, is in the position that Belgium would be in if France and Germany should withdraw ambassadors and go to fussing over Alsace and Lorraine again. He finds his neutral territory occupied in turn by opposing battalions; and he can only glower by way of demonstrating his resentment.



This is how "Peacock Alley" and its environs were invested:

Astor Court, on both the Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth Street sides, was guarded by irregular cavalry, cub reporters with pocket kodaks, in hansoms hired by the hour, so that if adamant Park Row auditors failed to visé an emergency war budget, pay envelopes might not be annihilated.

The flower of the attack, the "star" feature men, were massed upon the main and carriage entrances. Sure shots, these veterans of the assignment army, hardened by having faced the shrapnel of a J. Pierpont interview, and platoon fire at the City Hall, when a Mayor was making a sortie after being sniped at by editorials and sore from the club of the cartoonist. Like old campaigners, they were bivouacking comfortably, having renewed friendship with the traffic squad patrolmen supposed to keep sidewalk loiterers moving, but whom they had known in station house frontier days and now could cajole into non-interference.

Supporting the whole, deployed with consummate skill upon the few eminences that commanded the beleaguered hostelry, were the camera reserves, the heavy artillery of the expedition. Before the shuddering rattle of their reflex shutters the most brazen of get-rich-quick financiers quailed when he emerged on the run from a dummy directors' meeting. This camera cohort was the Ghorka regiment of the attack. They shot as a machine gun shoots, unemotionally, with an aim that never varied, whether quarry was crooked bank president setting forth upon an unwilling journey to the Tombs; breach of promise plaintiff toggled out in best bib and tucker; stuffy statesman just before and after blossoming into overdone oratory, or row of blanketed objects along the curb after a tenement fire. They worked grimly, without the suspicion of a frown or smile, and, like a mountain battery, their weapons could be used from any angle.

This is no description of Meade's maneuvering at Gettysburg. But you, who pick up your evening newspaper,

expecting to get all the news and the trimmings that go with it, even if you do discard the *Evening Gloat* as you step out of your limousine, leaving it for the chauffeur to pounce upon when he reaches the garage; even if it is the more dignified *Evening Star* and no other journal that lies under the green electroliner on your library table; little do you reckon that reporting nowadays has come to be vengeful warfare, with no quarter on either side.

The newspaper man has discovered that every other man's hand is against him; he is quick study, and he has learned his lesson. He hammers his typewriter or bawls over the telephone in time to make the last edition or conjure into being an extra, just as remorselessly as you, with the skeleton of scandal rattling its bones in family or business closet, order James to "show that reporter the door" in your Avenue palace or entrenched in your swinging brass rail and glass partition maze on the seventeenth floor of the Vampire Building.

Oldtimers, the G. A. R. veterans of Park Row, tell a different tale. There were moments in those days when one swapped cigars and yarns with the enemy across the lines; there was some show of respect for the white flag of truce; a treaty between opposing generals was kept. But that was long ago. Some day, perhaps—Park Row will hail it gladly, save the irregular cavalry brigade, the impetuous cub reporter *franc-tireurs*, with their Cross of the "Beat" Legion unearned—there will be a Hague tribunal to adjust the Public and the News.

All of which has precious little to do with Theodore Tuttle, at bay at his table, scouts of the attackers on guard in the foyer, Alice Collingwood toying with artichoke hearts in distracted mood, and the wedding ring he had bought the day before burning a hole in his striped flannel pocket.

Here enter Connors of the Camera Cohort.

Connors had been turned out of his developing room barracks in a hurry that June morning. He had found

just time enough to seize his huge and battered reflex and yell a word of direction to his understudy, who would have to finish making those prints for the Sunday "freak" page which had to go to press tomorrow, so that the color effects might be properly worked up. "One of those horrid camera men," Miss Collingwood had styled him, as she had turned her glance from the sentries on the lobby lounge, only to be confronted, through the plant-screened window and across the street, by Connors, wearing a more or less stained mustard-colored suit and loafing against a millinery shop railing. He had scraped acquaintance with a cabstand driver, who had let him tuck his plate box upon the seat of a taxi pending the summons of a fare.

Connors cherished no illusions in his role of adjunct to the News. He worked for a salary, without sensation of either pleasure or disgust aroused by what he was told to do. The one thing that really stirred him was the wife in the top floor flat on Third Avenue, where the "L" made too much noise, but a homey sort of place in spite of that. He had stopped drinking, Connors had; and he took his pay envelope home, unopened, on Saturday nights, something he once had laughed at other men for doing. That, however, had been before he met Minnie. His present ambition was to put enough in the Dry Dock Savings Bank to buy the little place in Dutchess County he had stumbled on the summer before last, when he had trailed along behind Bobby Brown, the *Gloat's* best crime sleuth, who had been dispatched to stir up the ghost of an ancient murder after some bones and a skull had been found in a well.

Brown had written really good freak stuff, with his name at the top, preceded by that two-letter preposition which is the D.S.O. of write-up men. And Connors had taken workmanlike photographs of the skull and bones and the doddering old folks of the hamlet, who remembered thinking it queer when Farmer Mullins moved away in the dark one night, after his

nearest neighbor had heard screams from the red farmhouse on the hill, that had been tenantless ever since.

What interested Connors was the green of the grass, the fruit in the neglected orchard and the view of the mountains. He'd learned, too, from the town clerk, one of the doddering oldsters he had photographed, that the place would be sold for unpaid taxes. None in the district wanted to buy because it was "spooky."

All the better. Minnie could banish spooks from the worst skull and bones place on the map, he knew. It could be bought, house, barn and all, with even the decaying implements and wagons, for fifteen hundred dollars. And Connors and Mrs. Connors had been saving to own that Dutchess County spook farm ever since. They would buy it in another year, if he held his job, and if Minnie's cough didn't get so bad that the dispensary doctors would have to stop prescribing sticky stuff in bottles and order her off to Liberty—which would mean a deal more than the carfare.

Connors was thinking of the farm as he lighted a cigarette the friendly cabby had bestowed upon him. He knew that within the hotel across the street—from which he would be thrown out enthusiastically by gilt-braided hall porters if he tried to enter; it is not permitted that heavy artillery of the yellow press shall plant battery in neutral zones—were two young persons who had suddenly taken out a marriage license without the customary heralding in the society columns; who presumably were heading for a runaway wedding, delayed only by a foolishly planned luncheon which had given him and his fellows of the camera cohort the chance to turn their flank. He knew, too, that this pair of young persons must be of great importance in the world of wealth and fashion, or he would not have been ordered up on the gallop to support the irregular cavalry, whose work with pocket kodaks made him curse when he developed their films in his darkroom closet. But he regarded

it as rather stupid sort of game to be stalking.

What Connors liked to snap his shutter at was something that could be focussed without having to neglect entirely the actinic. Train wrecks and things like that were the most satisfying, he found. The people you had to get then were mostly too badly hurt to protest; and even if they did, they couldn't get out of range, what with broken legs and the like; usually they were too weak even to raise hands to their faces in a stupid attempt to spoil pictures that were sure to look nice on the front page, with border stuff that the pen and ink art room fellows would fake up. He recalled, with a smoldering sense of injustice, how he had been hustled down the flooded grand staircase of Park Avenue Hotel the night it had caught fire from the Seventy-first Regiment Armory. Inspector Thompson of the police had found him taking a picture of the tarpaulin-covered rows that lay, with a soldierlike alignment, in the newly-decorated dining room on the second floor as the dawn streaked the windows. It wasn't that the Inspector had ordered him thrown out; he didn't mind wading down a staircase that was spouting water like a cataract, between rows of jeering patrolmen; what made him angry as he remembered was that they jostled him so that he almost dropped his "box" and lost his pictures. He had even borne no grudge against Bobby Brown, standing in the wrecked lobby and raising no word of protest as his camera man was evicted. He knew that Brown must have known that he had got what he had gone after, and that, within, the write-up "star" was rejoicing because the *Gloat* would have a picture "scoop" that night. And it had.

Connors had winked his shutter on many stage and society beauties, who, on dress parade, are all eager enough to be snapshotted, as every newspaper man knows. He confided to his friend the cabby that he had found the actress skirts the best subjects because they were more businesslike; they had their

grins gaited better than the others. Potshooting, at aviation or polo meets, with nothing but a row of heads over a grandstand rail for targets, was apt to be a bit tiresome. One woman's hat would keep poking in front of another's and all of the targets would be turning, just as he was ready, to answer some crack that the Willies in the second row, with the shaving brushes stuck in the rear of their felt Stetsons, were making. This society gunning was pretty punk, he assured the cabby. He hoped the pair under cover would be flushed soon and driven into the open, where he'd guarantee to pick 'em off like Annie Oakley, shooting from the hip if necessary.

"What are a pair of spoony society kids worth, anyway?" he asked.

"Huh! I don't know about that," said Leather Puttees. "I wish they'd let me rattle 'em to the Little Church Around the Corner, though. There's always a good five-spot in it when the Newport and Fifth Avenue nursery breaks off the reservation on the orange blossom warpath without telling ma and pa."

About the moment that Leather Puttees was making this remark, there was another fragment of conversation at the corner table. A somewhat puzzled waiter had carried away two untouched courses, and, after bringing coffee, had backed away to see if he could fathom wherein he or the chef had erred.

"You don't mind if I smoke, do you, Alice?" asked young Tuttle.

"You don't mind if I cry, do you, Teddy?" was what the girl in blue flung back. But, having done the flinging, she really looked as if she intended to begin.

"Why, dearest!" whispered Theodore Tuttle, Jr., imperilling the steaming cups as he leaned across.

The slow smile that rewarded him, and the smile that her slow smile lighted in turn, and the laugh that burst from them both, as the sudden sunbeam snips to ribbons the fog that will blur the best of June days occasionally, made the hovering waiter rub his hands de-

lightedly and retire to his fellow, three tables beyond, to gossip about a new and clumsy "omnibus," relieved of a haunting fear that his *pourboire* was shrinking by the minute.

"Please do smoke, Teddy," urged Miss Collingwood, her own cheerful self again. "Smoke hard, if it will help you to think."

But at least six cigarettes were ashes before inspiration came. Down town, in Wall Street, Tuttle père was squeezing the shorts without having to wait for anything so filmy as inspiration. Theodore Tuttle, Sr., had manufactured his own inspirations always, just as his father, the third in line of the Theodore Tuttles, had done. Theodore Tuttle IV wished Theodore Tuttle V to be the same sort of man.

Had he not indicated this to the Tuttle heir that morning, between grapefruit and chops? They had been alone at the table, for Teddy Tuttle's mother had died when he was at Groton. Some said she had found existence in a town palace, without the tiniest shred of inspiration on the premises, of too little value to care to retain her grasp upon it, when Teddy's little sister, who never lived to enjoy the wonderful things waiting for her, came. Mrs. Tuttle and the baby had gone away together, a hint of newly discovered inspiration on the stilled lips of the woman above whom Theodore Tuttle, Sr., bent brokenly, just before the well meaning but smug funeral director's men took charge of the house.

Teddy's father had said that morning: "It is time you came down to business regularly, Ted. You're to have a desk in the bond department at first and work your way up. You've a future on the Street, son. And as for this gossip about you and that Collingwood chit—I said 'chit,' and I mean it—let me hear nothing more about it. Not that the Collingwoods are not fine people. They are. I knew Emily Collingwood when she was a girl just out of finishing school. I—ahem—knew her quite well. But she would be just as shocked as I would be if she found that you and her daughter were entangled in any silly engagement."

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Perhaps his father was right. Maybe, if he had gone down to business the fall after he left college and had stuck to it, he also might have learned to manufacture his own inspirations; he might have been so far along by now that he would not have had to induce Alice Collingwood to make a hurried trip to the City Hall for a license and then promise to taxi over to Grace Church Parish House, where a fellow he knew in college, but who somehow had gone into curacy—to Teddy this sounded like bankruptcy or something equally unpleasant—had consented to marry them.

Not that it hadn't taken inspiration to make Alice agree to embark upon this journey. At least the Tuttle heir could lay the flattering unction to his soul that only a great deal of desperate, if inarticulate, inspiring had brought this to pass. Four afternoons on the links at the Country Club, pretending to golf, with Mrs. Collingwood waiting on the veranda to pour tea and inspect youthful countenances for telltale signs of mutiny; a half-dozen morning gallops in the park, with Alice's footman bribed to wait at the Plaza entrance until they had finished their canter to One Hundred and Tenth Street and back; one evening in a theater box, not to be marked with a white stone, when he had incurred the wrath of the chaperon by mumbling into Alice's ear through the whole three acts—oh, many ingredients had gone into the making of this *pot-à-feu* which he and Miss Collingwood were confronting, half convinced that it would burn their fingers if they touched it. And then, after long halting upon the threshold, as is its exasperating wont, inspiration knocked at the door.

"Look across the street, Alice," said Teddy. "Do you see the chap in the mustard-colored suit, the one talking to the taxi chauffeur?"

"It's a horrid camera man," said Miss Collingwood. Memory completed the identification. "Why, I believe it's the one that tried to scold me at Tuxedo because my hat brim hid mamma's face when he was snapping the Randalls' Horse Show box. Yes,

it is the same man. I remember his broken nose."

Then she eyed her companion in dismay as he unfolded his suddenly accrued strategy. But the Tuttle hope and heir was in earnest now; when he was in earnest he usually had his say. And, as she listened, the humor of the thing began to appeal; when he had done, she clapped her hands so vigorously that the solicitous waiter interpreted it as a summons, and came trotting toward the corner only to be ordered to retire, which he did, abashed by the sternness of the young man who had told him to go away and swap more stories with his friend of the fourth table.

It was a daring scheme that Teddy Tuttle proposed: nothing less than that Miss Collingwood should write a note to the camera man on the corner, telling him to climb into the taxi after bidding the driver be ready for a quick getaway, inducement for this lying in a promise that, if he agreed not to give the alarm to the rest, he would actually be allowed to attend the wedding and photograph all hands to his heart's content after it was over. In the meantime, however, he must have the taxi in readiness for a dash up the Avenue to Central Park.

"But he'll only get suspicious and strengthen the blockade," sighed Miss Collingwood.

"It's a sporting chance, I'll admit," said young Tuttle. "But sometimes the sporting chance wins out. I know a chap who was on the *Crimson* and got a job on the *Sun* after he left Cambridge. He told me once that what newspapers were always looking for was a beat. And, don't you see, we're offering this camera man one. We're exclusive news, Alice." He grinned amiably. "We can run the gauntlet in the lobby all right. The reporters can only ask me to talk and I'll refuse. The other camera men are at the main entrance, where they know my car is waiting. That mustard-colored fellow is all alone. It's the only weak point in the trap they've set for us. We can't stop the spread heads. We're probably in red ink already. Can't you see them? 'Alice Collingwood Elopes!'"

"Alice Collingwood elopes, indeed!"

cried the girl in blue. "That won't be the way they'll play it up. Probably it'll be: 'Theodore Tuttle's Son Startles Society. Heir to Tuttle Billions Marries Penniless Girl.'"

Whereupon said Tuttle heir had to breathe the superlative, "dearest," over the cold coffee several times before he could proceed with his argument.

"At all events," he said, "we can't dodge the stories. But what we can escape, if we're lucky, is the messy pictures. We'll kidnap this camera fiend, scoot up the Avenue to the park, losing the pursuit in the drive turns, and then swing back to Grace Church, where Billy Harris will be waiting. He's promised to stay at the Parish House until four. Then we'll go right downtown to pay a visit to father. Father has a board meeting on today—come to think of it, as a director I ought to be there, too—and he'll be at the office until late. We might as well get that over at once. You've never talked with father, have you?" He eyed her anxiously.

"No," she replied. "But I'm not thinking about your father. I'm thinking about mamma."

"Oh, after we see father we'll go right uptown and see her, too. There you are, you see. It's really simple. They won't mind after it's over and done. They'll have to make the best of it, and they haven't anything against it except that they think we're too young."

"Perhaps," mused Miss Collingwood. "Teddy dear, don't imagine I want to back out, or that I'm the least bit sorry. You've managed beautifully so far. I have the utmost confidence in you."

Small wonder that the breast of the Tuttle hope swelled beneath his striped flannel waistcoat. Whose chest would not heave if a girl in blue like Alice Collingwood declared that she believed you could cut for her a way through the cordon of the News, to Grace Church Parish House and waiting Billy Harris?

She took the gold pencil that he twisted from his key chain, and the luncheon card, upon the back of which she was to indite a message that should lure Connors of the Camera Cohort to



his undoing. Even she, with great faith in Teddy Tuttle's frank and simple outlook upon life, knew that he intended by fair means or foul, to disarm that picture man somewhere between the wedding and Park Row.

"What shall I say?" she asked. "It might be better if you did the writing."

Young Tuttle waved aside the proffered pencil. "No," he explained. "When one plots to outwit an enemy, a woman has been found to be most full of guile. All the authorities agree on that. Look at—well, look at all those history things, you know."

Five minutes afterward a "buttons" ran across the street to where Connors still exchanged the time of day with Leather Puttees. The sentries in the lobby did not know that the waiter who passed them carried truce proposals from the corner table. They had not failed to note the busy gold pencil among the coffee cups, but that might mean a letter to papa or a trifle more tender missive to mamma, or it might merely be the signing of a luncheon check; young Tuttle was sure to have a charge account at an Avenue hotel. Even if they had suspected, they could not have waylaid a letter carrier on neutral ground and what would have been the use of matching bribes with the son of a billionaire? Where they had really erred was in not detailing a man to watch the camera reservist on the corner. The truth is that, like many other seasoned campaigners, the scouting detail was a victim of the obvious. Wasn't the Tuttle car standing at the main carriage entrance? After a while the runaway pair would make up their minds to face the music and dart into the limousine, while reflexes rattled merrily and even the irregular cavalry snapped out-of-focus glimpses of them, which would not be reproduced in the late extras, but which would greatly fatten cub reporters' faith in their target medal score.

"Look-a-here!" exclaimed Connors, as the bellboy raced back to the vestibule, there to wait, according to instructions, for some sign of a reply.

"Look at what?" asked Puttees. "Well, I am dummed!" he added, as he

caught a glimpse of the card. "Somebody's going to send your lunch out here. That's a menyew, friend. Let me in on the eats. You can spread the entrays on the seat cushion."

"Roll over; you're snoring," said Connors. "Get wise, pal. This here bill of fare has a note on the back from the girl I'm waiting to shoot when she comes out with that Tuttle kid who's run off with her to get married."

"On the level?"

"Read it yourself," urged Connors. And Puttees read, "Dear Mr. Camera Man," and the rest of it, slapping his thigh as he reached the taxicab part of the communication. "There's a chanst for both of us," he said, going over to the car and beginning to tinker with the levers.

"Wait a minute," objected Connors. "It might be a plant. And yet if I pulled this off by myself there'd be a bonus in it at the shop. I don't owe that camera gang more'n a grouch, anyway. They beat me to death last week, when that cup defender got stuck on the ways and I'd hustled back to town with my plates. I'm sorter in Dutch at the office now; the old man gave me an everlasting call for that. If I'd pull this off it'd make me the white-haired boy all right, all right."

"Aw, come on," pleaded Puttees, already in his seat, with the taxi door swinging open on the hotel side. "Don't pass up a cinch thing like this. I'll buy out of the fare—where they don't push 'em across for less than fifteen cents straight, either. Come on."

Connors cast an eye to windward and to leeward, groaning within him to think that now, with the big chance at hand, some gunner from the other camera batteries might appear. But the coast was clear. He beckoned to Buttons, who sped across the street.

"They're on. Tell 'em they're on," he said, and he was on the box beside Puttees in a jiffy.

"We must give 'em a run for their money," said the cabby. "I know most of the traffic men between here and Forty-second Street, and if we get a few blocks' start we're all right. And watch

me lose 'em in the park if they do catch up! We're in for a lucky bit of coin. I was needin' some excitement this afternoon. This June weather gets into me somethin' fierce. Don't it hit you that way?"

But Connors was busy with his plateholders. He had a vision of the farm in Dutchess County, perhaps twenty-five dollars nearer; he'd known them to hand out bonuses that big for picture scoops at the *Evening Gloat* office.

The couple at the table saw camera man and cabby in place. "They're going to do it," murmured Miss Collingwood. "They're actually going to do it, Teddy!" It needed not the discreet message of Buttons, via the waiter who had just laid a coin in the boy's hand, to impart intelligence that a way of escape was open.

"You'll go into the writing room, Alice," directed young Tuttle. "And while I am allowing myself to be held up, slip through the east door and into the taxi. Leave the car door open. I'll need every second."

When Miss Collingwood and her escort moved toward the lobby there was a sudden vacating of the leather lounge. But very deferentially and, in so far as circumstances allowed, one might say delicately, did the reporter scouts form in *echelon*. The News always conducts its skirmishing with duello ceremony unless it is met with a show of weapons in advance, delusion of the General Public to the contrary notwithstanding.

The bride-to-be slipped past the pickets at the first "I beg your pardon, Mr. Tuttle, but—" The man she was going to marry watched her disappear, and then turned with good humor to the others. Young Tuttle was naturally genial; his manner at this crisis made his attackers feel sorry they had to use him for "copy" on such a pleasant June afternoon. Think not, you who are trailed in moments of grief or happiness by the news gathering pack, that there is not some spark of pity for you as the News takes your brush. Reporters usually have wives or mothers or sisters at home, whom they guard against annoyances of sorts. And you who have

not yet been "copy"—the world is one long unwritten sheet of it to Park Row—bear this in mind when first at bay because of either what you have or have not done.

"I'm sorry, gentlemen," began Theodore Tuttle, Jr., "but honestly I cannot say anything." The foyer clock, with its precise, if hitching and too ornate, minute hand, was telling him that by now a certain youthful person in blue cloth was fidgeting. And with the realization came a mood of playfulness; he would twit the sentries who had fancied they had him bottled up. "Where will the marriage take place, and when? Really, gentlemen, you must excuse me. But I'll drive a bargain with you." He paused, to prolong the pleasure he was extracting from the moment. Surely this was inspiration. He'd tell Tuttle, Sr., about the way he had mocked the interviewing crew.

"Very good," remarked the Senior Reporter, scenting trouble from this unexpected pliancy of a harried bridegroom. "But what is the bargain?"

"I'll tell you what I'll do. I can't invite the lot of you, but when Miss Collingwood and I are married I promise to take along one of your own pickets as a guest of honor." He thrust his hands deep into his trousers pockets and grinned. "Is that fair enough?" he asked.

"You really mean that?" asked the Senior Reporter. He said afterward on the Row that he felt sure young Tuttle was stringing him, but for the life of him couldn't imagine how.

"No joking," was the reply. From without came the impatient hoot of a taxi horn. "And that is all just now."

Two stout and overdressed ladies, heading westward for "Peacock Alley," were scandalized by the spectacle of "a nice-looking young man, too," running, actually sprinting through the corridor. The fleetest-footed pursuer heard a tonneau door slam, saw Leather Puttees let in the clutch and gears, marked the triumphant hand that Connors wagged as the car shot into the Avenue and skimmed northward. Teddy Tuttle's getaway was an accomplished fact.

"For the love of Mike!" muttered the fleetest-footed scout. "For the love of Mike! And Connors, of the *Gloat*, was on the box seat!"

The Senior Reporter was a philosopher. "Gentlemen," he remarked, "the heir to the Tuttle millions is a man of honor. He has kept his word. Only we should hardly have chosen broken-nosed Connors of the *Gloat* as our most representative wedding guest. I'm glad I don't work on a picture paper." Then he went to raise the siege and order the irregular cavalry back to station house and police court.

And so they were married.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Theodore Tuttle, Jr., will forget the zest with which Puttees put them far beyond overtaking and zigzagged them downtown from the Park, using no thoroughfare that the baffled scout detail might haunt in the hope of picking up a cold scent. Through it all the demeanor of Connors was admirable. He was a machine gun of the News, that was all—paid to do what he was doing. He manifested no sign of feeling as Teddy Tuttle explained the circumstances to the Reverend Billy Harris, who, sure enough, was waiting at the Parish House, and led the party of three over to the chantry. There, after reading the license, he pronounced the words that made the scrawl of a hurried City Hall clerk of lasting effect.

It was when Connors rattled his reflex shutter in the sunlight that streamed through stained glass, snapshotting the bride, the bride and bridegroom, and the bride and bridegroom with the officiating clergyman, in turn, that the Reverend Billy protested.

"I'm likely to be unfrocked for this," he objected, "unless you madcap children sign a paper setting forth that it was against my wishes and at your express desire." Which was done.

"And now," young Tuttle told Connors, "I'll make a good job of it and take you down to your office. We'll pass Park Row on the way to Wall Street, anyway. You'll be in plenty of time for your baseball extra. That's where we'll go, I fancy—on the front page with the Giants' score."

"Much obliged," said Connors, explaining to Puttees as he crawled upon the box again.

"You're sure in luck, pal," said the chauffeur. "Ain't this one great June day, though—just the sort for weddin's? An' the motor's workin' fine. I was afraid, though, we might have a blowout when we hit that bad asphalt near the Circle."

It startled Mrs. Theodore Tuttle, Jr., when her husband's final bit of craftiness became manifest. To tell the truth, Miss Collingwood—that was found herself so transfigured by touching an unfamiliar ring upon the third finger of her left hand, and so perturbed by what mamma might say before she shed tears of forgiveness, that she had forgotten those *Evening Gloat* pictures.

But the Tuttle heir was accustomed to seeing things through when he had begun them. And at Bleecker Street, just as they slid in front of a southbound Broadway car, a jolt somehow thrust his walking stick against the camera that Connors—a bit carelessly, it must be confessed—was nursing on his knee. The big reflex clattered downward, and what the fall had not accomplished the wheels of the street car completed.

The automobile stopped with a jerk while Connors hurdled the mudguard to gather up the fragments. His face by no manner of means indicated the despair that racked his bosom as he rose and shook his head. But the mental grin of the Tuttle heir faded; he read a part of the tragedy that lay behind the broken-nosed man's eyes.

"Aw, hell!" said Connors—not to the bride and bridegroom, but to his friend Leather Puttees. "There ain't nothin' left worth pickin' up. Even the lens is gone. They'll dock me for that."

Here Mrs. Tuttle Jr., came out of her brown study. "Why, Teddy!" she cried. Her look of reproach was cold water upon the bridegroom's fading glee. Remorse smote him, and he offered instant recompense.

"I'm sorry," he said, tapping the camera man's arm. He really was sorry—now. "Have the driver stop at the

nearest camera shop. I'll buy you a brand new box and outfit."

"But them weddin' pictures?" queried Connors.

"Well, we can't go back to the church," remarked young Tuttle impatiently. "But I'm hanged if I don't take you downtown to Wall Street and let you do it all over again there!"

This is what he did. And Connors had finished making some nice exposures—the light was much better than it had been in the chantry—when Theodore Tuttle, Sr., entered, fresh from a directors' meeting, at which the absence of the Tuttle heir had been entered on the minutes.

"What in the name of—" he sputtered as he eyed the tableaux.

"Hello, father!" exclaimed Tuttle, Jr., rising to the occasion manfully. He looked so victorious that something resembling a thrill of pride in the boy and his spunk touched the man who never waited for inspiration, but made them after a prescription of his own. "I'm afraid I'm a bit late for that directors' meeting, but I'm coming down to all of them from now on, honest and truly. I'm going to start in at that desk in the bond department next week, too—we'll have to take a few days for a wedding journey, you know."

"Why—ahem—child, you look quite like your mother," remarked the astounded maker of trusts when Mrs. Tuttle, Jr., had finished the disarmament by a clinging touch at the psychologic moment. After which, bride and bridegroom accounted for the presence of Connors, who was improving the moment the gods vouchsafed by taking potshots at a billionaire in the act of becoming reconciled with a runaway son and daughter-in-law.

"But this invasion of privacy is preposterous—outrageous!" declared Theodore Tuttle, Sr., beginning to fume as he had done among his rebellious directors.

He eyed Connors balefully, the latter now busy packing up his kit. "Here, Ted, ask that fellow what he'll sell the plates for—all of them."

"What will you take for them?" asked the bridegroom. "You may keep the camera, of course. That is a wedding present from us."

It was no time to strike lightly. Perhaps this was the Providence Minnie often talked of when her cough was worse than usual. It was the farm in Dutchess County or nothing. And he could tell the shop to go to blazes. This was by no means the faintest flavor in his mixture of emotions—for Connors was beginning to have emotions at last. He threw back his slouching shoulders, as far as the cramped mustard-colored coat would let him. And he heard a voice that must be his own saying, "Fifteen hundred—cash."

"Give it to him," shouted the maker of trusts. "And send him away. If the board knew I was entertaining an *Evening Gloat* photographer, they'd ask for a commission in lunacy."

Connors wrinkled his eyebrows. Somehow he wouldn't feel contented to depart with this girl in blue thinking he was an ordinary hold-up man. Not that he cared what old Moneybags thought. He'd photographed plenty of that sort on their way to the Tombs. "You see, it's because I want to buy that farm for Minnie, miss," he said. "She's not well, and needs the country air."

The Tuttle heir took the new and crackly bills a clerk had brought. "Fourteen hundred—fourteen fifty—fifteen hundred," he counted.

Connors, late of the Camera Cohort, stuffed the money into his pocket and laid his plateholders upon the mahogany desk.

"They're sure to be good pictures," he said, with a trace of the artist's satisfaction in work well done. "It'll pay you to have 'em developed."



# THE CONQUEST OF RICHARD THE SILENT

By Philip Curtiss

DARRELL, coming up from the polo field, very mussed and very picturesque, clumped across the veranda, looking unusually boyish in spite of the streaks of gray in his curly hair. His wife lying back in a wicker chair did not look up from the current monthly which she was reading, and Darrell playfully snatched it out of her hand.

The magazine, however, could not have been very absorbing for she hardly protested, merely remarking:

"Get out, you parasite on society, you undesirable citizen!"

Darrell gritted his teeth in feigned anger and took her by the shoulder.

"Parasite on society, eh? Undesirable citizen? Where did you learn that?" and the polo player looked suspiciously toward his sister-in-law, who was sitting in guilty unconsciousness in the hammock, for he well knew that his pretty little wife could hardly have ferreted the phrases out by herself, and he suspected her more intellectual ally.

The latter, in fact, could feign unconsciousness no longer, and she laughed as she picked up the discarded magazine and said:

"As near as I can make out from this article, the last whisper in degenerate civilization is the man who plays polo."

"Or the woman who owns a lapdog," added Darrell quickly, with a glance at the Pomeranian lying at her feet.

"Score one for the Darrell family!" shouted Mrs. Darrell gleefully.

Her sister, nonplused for a ready answer, resorted to the authorities and handed him the magazine, marking the

place with her fingers, while Darrell read it aloud with deep emphasis:

"The time has come when our idle rich must realize that creation has no place for them and their inanities. For it is a vital fact that nature has no room for the overdeveloped. It is the rough, primitive man with a biceps that she loves, and not the weak, effeminate creature whom we see in the country houses with no thought except for his whist, his small talk and his polo ponies."

Darrell grinned.

"That must mean Richard the Silent," he suggested, and even his sister-in-law was obliged to smile at the absurdity of the suggestion.

"His nature could hardly be called effeminate," she agreed, while Darrell, eager to pursue his advantage, asked:

"Have you heard of his latest adventure in courtly manners?"

"You mean about the seats in his dog-cart?" she asked tentatively.

"Oh, no," roared Darrell, eager for the chance to tell it. "There's a new one much better than that. It seems that Tom Bigbee and that pretty little Archer girl were starting out to ride from the club two or three days ago, when they saw Dick mooning around the piazza all alone, as usual, and out of sheer pity asked him to go along. He grew red and hemmed and hawed and couldn't think of words to get out of it, so he went. So they rode along, one on each side of her, most of the afternoon, Tom and Miss Archer firing repartee right and left and Dick never saying a word, until Miss Archer, thinking that he wasn't having a very good time, tried to draw him into the conversation and mentioned the fact that her stirrup didn't fit her boot, say-



ing: 'Don't you think, Mr. Grew, that there is nothing more uncomfortable than a tight stirrup?'

"Dick sort of choked, and then, making a brave effort to get into the conversation, replied: 'Oh, but Miss Archer you don't know the agony of wearing a tight puttee over a Boston garter.'"

The laugh that followed was general, and Mrs. Darrell, picking up the magazine which had started it, waved the fluttering pages at her husband.

"Shoo, now," she said, "and get ready for dinner."

In the meantime Dick Grew, better known as Richard the Silent, was driving leisurely from the polo field to his bungalow in a state of healthy glow which represented to him the nearest approach to the absolute Nirvana.

The story and his nickname fairly well describe the general character of the man as seen by his friends—one of those great, hulking mastiff puppies of a fellow who are found knocking over the chairs and breaking the china in any given society. No one quite remembered his coming or how he happened to be in the coterie of Lyndmere Hills, except that someone had met him at one of the polo tournaments—Lakewood, probably—and had told him that there was good sport at the Hills. At that he had drifted up with the ponies and the visiting players, had stayed at the Inn all summer, had then bought a bungalow and become a fixture.

It is one of the tricks of literature to describe persons whose habits, instincts and life are beautifully, surprisingly, above their surroundings, but someone ought to write a book about men like Dick Grew whose habits are ridiculously below them. For he was, in short, one of those strange, primitive creatures who can be found in any society where fashion has become tinged with a sporting character—one of those men whose money and leisure could give them the companionship of the finest intellects the country affords and who prefer apparently the society of bookmakers and grooms—one of those men whose connections could lead them to the vital events of Europe and America and yet whose

life is made up of eating, horseracing and sleep—one of those men whose cards would introduce them to any gathering of quick, alert assemblies and yet who stay home to wash a dog.

Dick Grew, in fact, stayed home so much that there came to be a sort of mystery about him—or as much of a mystery as there ever could be about such a blushing, awkward general joke of a man. Sheila Miller, whose wit set the pace for Lyndmere, concluded that he was the happy result of "Grew's Great Grenadines" or "Grew's Sarsaparilla for Growing Pains," like many another mystery in society, and that his seclusion and his bashfulness were attempts to hide his lowly origin.

As for the rest of Lyndmere, it had long ceased to analyze and accepted him in the ratio of one hundred per cent as a horseman to zero as a member of society; as a man who knew more about polo ponies than the average trainer and less about small talk and dinner cards; as a man who wore riding clothes better than anyone this side of Narragansett and who wore all other clothes worse. At that he was left in peace with his stables, his pipe and his bungalow.

But on the occasion with which this story opens Richard the Silent was destined to occupy a continued place in the conversation of the Darrell family, which is another way of saying in the conversation of Lyndmere itself.

It began as before with the polo player's attempts to tease his pretty little wife and the intervention of the latter's formidable ally, her sister; for, as Mrs. Darrell worked prettily and ineffectually on a tiny piece of embroidery, her husband made equally industrious attempts to hinder her.

"Oh, stop, Rob," she exclaimed at last. "I have simply got to have this doily finished for the fair, day after tomorrow."

"What fair?" asked Darrell listlessly. "Mrs. Van Vleck's, for the benefit of the mountain whites."

Darrell sat a moment in thought.

"Do you know," he said at last, "I am becoming more and more convinced that the thing I want to be, next to a parasite

on society, is a mountain white. It is perfectly obvious that theirs is the softest lot in modern existence. I haven't heard one single word in twelve months except the mountain whites. Down at Aiken every fair finger in the golf club was sewing night and day for the lucky devils. This spring you gave the most successful lawn party in the history of gardening for the pampered dears. Mrs. Van Vleck is getting up Delmonico's waiters and the Symphony Orchestra for the luxurious rascals, and Sophie says that half the girls in Smith College are getting ready to go down to minister to their needs. It seems to me you ought to do something for the poor whites in your own family."

"Charity begins at home," suggested Miss Miller, the sister-in-law, with a triteness that was unworthy of her.

"Sure," agreed Darrell lazily. "Now why wouldn't it be a good scheme to get up a bazaar for the benefit of the undesirable citizens—to sew a few saddle-cloths and polo boots for the idle rich?"

"And get Eugene V. Debs and Emma Goldman to put down their names as honorary patrons," suggested Miss Miller.

"That's the idea," agreed Darrell. "Now here you have a class that has been absolutely forgotten except by about a million people who have bills to collect and livings to earn by pampering to their rotten and profitable tastes."

"Do you know what I have thought of?" exclaimed Miss Miller, sitting up in the hammock suddenly.

"Yes, millions of things," began Darrell, but Miss Miller paid no attention.

"Do you know," she repeated, "I think it would be the grandest idea in the world to give a benefit for Richard the Silent."

Mrs. Darrell stopped her sewing and looked on in amazement, while her husband glanced toward the speaker with amused curiosity, his silence offering encouragement for her to continue.

"It would be perfectly simple and wonderfully ingenious," she explained, with all the delight of having unint-

rupted right to the floor. "Here we have a poor outlawed creature living in the most unspeakable surroundings—"

"Keeps his collars in the wagon house," echoed Darrell, who had been to visit Richard once or twice.

"A poor human soul longing for uplift," recited Miss Miller, "one of nature's own children, crying for the light, and yet condemned to live in darkness, all for the lack of a helping hand."

"Bully!" exclaimed Darrell. "We've got to do one real charitable act to raise the fallen." He slapped his knee in delight. "We'll regenerate Richard the Silent. We'll call this a society or something, and have a constitution and by-laws—'Benevolent and Protective Alliance for Uplifting the Lazy Rich—Main Office in Newport—Uniformed Representatives in All the Divorce Courts!'"

"Rob!" exclaimed Mrs. Darrell, who didn't know what it was all about but was sure that her husband was saying something wicked.

Miss Miller allowed him to finish.

"No," she added at last, "you don't quite catch the idea. My plan is simply this—that we should all look about us and lend a helping hand to the charity that is nearest at home. Now here is poor Richard—Bonhomme Richard—going rapidly to perdition all for the want of a woman's hand."

"I knew there would be a love story somewhere," suggested Darrell.

"There has got to be," affirmed his sister-in-law. "Charity clothes herself in a multitude of forms."

"Mostly doilies."

"Will you be quiet?" insisted Miss Miller. "You spoiled my speech. Charity clothes herself in a myriad of forms—"

"'Myriad' is much better than 'multitude.'"

Darrell dodged, and the magazine struck harmlessly against the piazza wall.

"Well, anyway, Charity, having put on her walking suit, turns up the nearest street, and sometimes with money, and sometimes with little deeds of kindness—"

"Little drops of water, little grains of

sand—no, excuse me, Sheila, I'll let you finish."

Miss Miller was mollified and came at once to the point.

"This is going to be scientific charity," she resumed. "We find the need and offer the remedy which it requires in the most effective way. Now Richard the Silent needs nothing more than a woman's helping hand. Question: how to supply it so that the charity will least hurt his sensitive pride. Answer: the only thing he ever did in his life is play polo—"

"And make breaks," suggested Rob.

"The only thing he ever did in his life is to play polo. Now why can't the charitable ladies of this household organize a benefit polo match, and have at hand all the beautiful, unattached damsels in the county?"

"But," suggested Mrs. Darrell, "Richard would never take the money from such a benefit."

Even the Pomeranian laughed.

Rob and Miss Miller, however, went into executive session at once and elected the former president and the latter all the other officers.

"Don't we get a director's fee?" asked Darrell in an aggrieved air.

"Not until we put through a deal," was the reply; "and then we get a commission."

With that Darrell was content and plans continued until Mrs. Darrell put out the lights.

By vote of the directors, Darrell was to handle the masculine end and Miss Miller the feminine, that is to say, the former would arrange the polo match and secure the unconscious coöperation of the central figure while the latter would make up a list of eight girls who, as Darrell suggested, would form the "clientele."

To this end the vice-president, the secretary and the treasurer began to count up on her ten fingers.

"To begin with," she said, "we must have Miss Archer, as she has already displayed a willingness to be decent to the subject of this romance, which is a sign of an open mind; then the Barr girls will come to anything where they

have a chance to wear pretty clothes. That makes three. Maisie O'Connor and Ruth Davenport will make five, Helen Maltbie six, and I suppose we shall have to ask Betty if we ask Helen—that makes seven—one, two, three, five, seven. One more—who will it be? The eighth ought to be the star of the performance."

"Why don't you ask Jean Markham?" chirped Mrs. Darrell, who had not spoken a word up to that time.

"Well, sister mine, if you're not a genius!" exclaimed Miss Miller. "By all the laws of supply and demand, that's exactly what we'll do—and kill two birds with one stone. Mr. Darrell, you parasite, why didn't you think of that before? Here's Jean, pretty, demure, clever, well educated and poor as your jokes; and there's Richard the Silent, gruff, unhappy, lonely and rich as one of mine—"

"Which represent the unearned increment," suggested Darrell.

"Or rather pearls before the usual beast," amended Miss Miller. "Anyway, disregarding your banter, the Uplift League shall justify its existence and unite these two lonely lives. I set the date at once, a week from Tuesday, rain or shine."

The plans did indeed move with the swiftness of genius, as all of the "clientele" showed a willingness that verged on eagerness to attend a small dinner dance at the Darrells' following a special polo match for what was labeled, rather mysteriously, the "Vice-President's Cup." The president, however, found that in securing the presence of the chief performer he met with apparently insurmountable obstacles. His consent to the polo match was of course perfectly easy—for Grew would have accepted an invitation to knock the ball around all alone on the plains of Timbuctoo, but when the dinner dance was broached it proved to be entirely another matter.

"Why, hang it, Darrell," protested Richard, growing red and kicking one boot with the other, for all the world like a barefoot boy, "you know I appreciate it and all that sort of thing, but, hang it

—well, oh, thunder, you know I'm not much on that sort of thing, and blame it all, I'd like to, but, heavens—"

And in spite of all his efforts, Darrell was unable to budge him, so the committee on membership was obliged to go back to the Uplift League without even a report of progress.

The vice-president and the other officers was not, however, as much discouraged as she might have been.

"You ought to have explained to him," she said, "that we have just the right number of girls for the two polo teams, and that it would spoil everything if he didn't come."

"I did," replied her brother-in-law, "but he just blushed some more and said he was sorry but he couldn't possibly do it."

"Then that settles it," replied the majority of the officers; "since masculine inefficiency is such, I shall simply have to go myself and beard the lion in his den."

"The Douglas in his hall," added Darrell. "Only you may find that the hand of Douglas is his own, and never shall in marriage clasp the hand of such as Markham grasp."

"From all you say," replied Miss Miller enigmatically and most unscientifically, "I begin to like that man. If Jean Markham won't have him I'm going to shake her."

And bearded the lion in his den she did, a pretense being most easy to find when she made arrangements to drive over with her brother-in-law in the dogcart to see a new hunter which was the pride of Richard's life and, incidentally, of the countryside. At the proposal Mrs. Darrell looked rather shocked and asked:

"Do you think it will be proper?"

"Why, bless your heart," replied her sister, "you talk like Beatrice Fairfax and her 'Advice to the Lovelorn.' Of course it will be proper;" and Mrs. Darrell, who had long since learned that acquiescence is a cheap price for settlement, spake no farther.

The same afternoon, while the woods were still sweet and heavy from a ten hours' rain, Miss Miller and Darrell drove up to the bungalow, where Rich-

ard the Silent hailed them, clad in confusion and a sweater jacket, the former of which he easily shed when once plunged into the subject of Hathaway the prize winning hunter, which was brought from the stables and displayed with all the fond adoration of the owner.

Miss Miller, however, rather chafed under the length to which the display of the animal grew, and when Darrell started with the head groom on a visit to the stables, she skillfully drew Richard the Silent apart.

"Mr. Grew," she said, as the victim seemed prone to follow the others, "you know I have never seen the Lyndmere cup which you won last season. I was away at the time, and I have been very anxious to have a look at it. Can't you take this opportunity to get it out from under lock and key?"

Again the confusion seemed on the point of resuming its place above the sweater jacket, and looking wildly about him like a drowning man for help, Richard gasped:

"It—it is up at the house. But I should be very glad to show it. If Darrell—"

But the skillful vice-president was not going to let opportunity slide, and she hastened to interrupt:

"Oh, Rob is busy for the next twenty minutes, and, besides, he has seen it. We'll have a look and be back by the time he is through."

With another gaze of helplessness but without another word Grew led the way to the bungalow.

As she entered it seemed to Miss Miller's feminine soul that she had never in her life seen a place so beautifully, so pathetically masculine. Carpets there may have been some time, but they had long since disappeared, and there remained only bare floors, which seemed, when she thought of it, the only proper thing for boots and spurs to clump over. On the walls, in the perfect artistry of haphazard, were one or two old English sporting prints showing the abnormally skinny horses of the period, the red coats and the grotesque faces of the Sam Weller type, a great mass of blue, red and yellow prize ribbons, with here and there

a whip or hunting horn whose placing could not have been other than that of a loving eye.

In one corner stood a sheaf of polo mallets, and on a table where they had fallen lay an old coat, a whip and a pair of spurs in a grouping which might have been arranged by an artist as models for one of those musty old "sporting panels" which we still find in the back corners of antique shops.

By nature Miss Miller was an artist, and the sudden, unexpected completeness of the thing perfectly fascinated her. Forgotten in a minute were her once cynical thoughts of "Grew's Great Grenadines," and she almost shrieked with delight when three hounds which had been lying in the shadow of the fireplace rose with dignified ease and pressed their muzzles against their master's knees.

In his own house, moreover, there fell over Grew himself a certain dignity, a quiet lord-of-the-manor air, and, with an utter absence of his former confusion, he began fumbling carelessly among a group of cups on a shelf for the one which he sought, while Miss Miller continued her perfect enjoyment of the scene.

As she did so, her eye caught sight of a sabre lying among two crops on the mantel, and she started toward it eagerly. Grew heard her movement and turned, but she already had the dull nickel scabbard in her hand.

"Oh, isn't this perfect!" she exclaimed. "Where in the world did you get it?" But at that same minute the blade came out with a rush, and as Grew stood in awkward silence she read on the blade:

"Richard F. Grew, Manila, P. I."

The girl looked at the sabre and then at the man. He stood with his back to the window, where the gray light of the wet afternoon lifted his shoulders into almost heroic prominence, and his shocked hair, above them, completed the outline of a very giant of a man.

"You don't mean to say," she exclaimed, "that you have been in the army?"

He nodded at the question.

"For eleven years," he replied in quiet simplicity. "My father was in the

army," he added; "and his father before him."

There seemed to be a question in the silence which followed, and he ended lamely: "It was my mother's family which had—which was not—"

With a tenderness which almost brought tears to the eyes of the girl, he took the sabre and quietly slipped it back into its scabbard.

"Here," he said—"here is the Lyndmere cup."

As Darrell and his sister-in-law drove back in the dogcart, the latter's only comment was, "He said he'd come;" and Darrell wondered in vain why the vice-president and all the other officers failed to pass a vote of commendation on their own success.

The benefit polo match was played as scheduled, and was no doubt a very great success, as the Freebooters, captained by Richard Grew, beat the Skyrockets, under Robert Darrell,  $8\frac{3}{4}$  to  $7\frac{1}{2}$ , although Darrell still insists, in executive sessions of the Uplift League, that, like the chariot races in the circus, it was all prearranged. The dinner dance was also a success as planned, for it was noticeable that the tall blonde "Number Two," imported from Litchfield for the occasion, was so attentive to Jean Markham that their engagement, announced in November, could be fairly said to date from the moment; but the great event was one entirely off the program, one so unexpected that Richard the Silent and Miss Miller were showered with congratulations until the former bit clean through three cigars and the latter, for once in her life, failed utterly at repartee.

And, after the guests had gone, as Mrs. Darrell was scurrying around to see that none of the candles had burned the shades, her husband, on the piazza, found time to rally his sister-in-law.

"And now," he asked, "what do you think of the success of the Uplift League?"

"Oh, well," she replied with all her old certainty, "it is a primal fact, in all great sociological movements, that, before undertaking any work of importance, we must go and see 'how the other half lives.'"



# HIS GREAT CHANCE

By Melville Chater

YOUNG Arthur Var had come out of the West, and was painting joyous prairie and cloud effects in the little top floor office—called, by grace of a supplemented skylight, a studio—in east Fourteenth Street, long before any of us were aware of his existence. That was because he was so morbidly sensitive about calling attention to himself. Had you sought out Var, he would have displayed his work with an almost human degree of pride. Had you waited for Var to seek you out, he would have chosen the alternative and starved himself. One morning, in fact, Michael Meara, the janitor, discovered him pacing the floor, his belt at the innermost hole, his home letters torn to shreds and a desperate look in his eyes. With an understanding of hunger, if not of art, Mike straightway passed the word onward to Var's fellow painters, with whom the neighborhood teemed at that time. A score of us embryonic academicians burst into his studio, under pretense of mistaking it for someone else's, welcomed him to our midst, admired his work—and invited him to dinner. Afterward we secretly contributed a dollar apiece and suborned a friend to call at Var's place and fall in love with one of his canvases. Var suspected the conspiracy, and, being inordinately proud, refused to sell. Eventually one of us forced the money upon him as a loan.

By degrees we grew to understand Var and to love him. As true as a sword, shy as a dreamy child, gaily irresponsible as a city sparrow, and torrentially enthusiastic over the merest trifle—there you have young Var. Women found in him something eternally boyish and

appealing; they always wanted to "mother" him, to pat his light, wavy hair. But oh, his incurable sensitiveness, his Quixotic high-mindedness! Like the traditional gentlewoman in reduced circumstances, if he had been forced to cry his wares in the marketplace, it would have been with the added aside: "I hope to heaven that nobody heard me!" His, too, that stern code of conduct which sometimes springs from the promptings of very gentle blood; and for him the decalogue was contained in the one stringent phrase: "Things which no gentleman would do."

Touching Alice Nelsen, he would assuredly have persevered to the end in concealment and the worm-i'-the-bud attitude, had she not cornered him and all but insisted that to live in poverty with him was her idea of bliss. Then, shortly after their engagement, young Var went to an art students' ball one night, drank a few glasses of wine—the boy never had a head for such—and kissed a model who had made eyes at him. Would you believe that his remorse over this foolish business almost ended the engagement? He had broken his faith; he had done one of those things which no gentleman would do. Without a thought of self-condonement or a word of explanation, he dropped out of Miss Nelsen's life, avoiding her like the plague. The poor girl nursed her heart in silence for a month; then the facts filtered back to her, and she went straight to Var's studio to tell him that, whatever had happened, she was only waiting to forgive him. It was said that he kissed her hand with tears in his eyes, and that his humiliation was painful to behold.

Var dwelt on among us, working earnestly and well, yet somehow recognition did not come. He had an odd theory that the opportunities which one seeks out always prove to be second rate. The Great Chance, as he called it, could never be run to cover. Heaven-sent, it must seek out the man. "My great opportunity! My golden chance!" he would cry as he strode up and down his studio, declaiming on that tide in the affairs of men which he would take at flood one day and command fortune.

And then, after seven years—for three of which he had known Alice—simply enough his Great Chance came. Miss Nelsen's sister married no one less than the nephew of J. Harmon Becket. Becket, a man of sixty, the senior partner in a great drygoods firm and many times a millionaire, was probably the most sought-after picture buyer in New York. Combining the qualities of a hard-headed business man with a genuine esthetic perception, he prided himself especially on being a patron of American art. To command ten minutes of his time was regarded like a visitation of the gods. To have one picture in a loan exhibition, labeled as the property of J. Harmon Becket, set the hallmark of recognition on a painter and opened a market eager for his work. This was the man whom Arthur Var now met.

Consider the circumstances. Var's fiancée's sister chose, of all the world, J. Harmon Becket's nephew. Next, from no deeper motive than sheer affection, Var sent his future sister-in-law "Manhattan in Mists," the work of his hands, as a wedding present. And, finally, J. Harmon Becket returned from abroad in the very nick of time to be paraphrased as "among those present." Did Fate ever preside more palpably at the conjunction of two people? Just before leaving the wedding reception, Becket spied Arthur Var's picture, admired it and expressed an interest in the man who had painted it. A moment later Alice Nelsen, aglow with pride, presented her fiancé to the famous collector. A hundred unknown painters might have schemed for years without

attaining the same result. Becket studied the light-haired, eager-faced young man, tapped his gold *pince-nez* on his forefinger and asked how long the other had been painting.

"Oh, not many years," Var answered modestly. "Not long enough to have found myself yet, I'm afraid."

"Long enough to have done *that*!" snapped Becket, indicating the picture. He was brusque, domineering in manner, and he detested self-detraction. "Hard worker?"

Var stammered that he hoped he was. "You exhibit? . . . Occasionally, h'm! Never saw your work before."

Var met the great man's eye and smiled with nervous deference; then, moistening his lips, he made his plunge into that flood tide which leads on to fortune.

"If you'd be so good as to come to my studio—" he said.

"Where is it?" demanded J. Harmon Becket, hobnobber with merchant princes.

Reddening with embarrassment, the painter mentioned his address. East Fourteenth Street! It was a phrase to assail the ears and scorch the tongue.

"I'll stop in sometime," said Becket casually. "We're living in the country just now." He shook Var's hand and moved away. Turning back, he added: "Let's see; tomorrow's Sunday, eh? I and my wife will motor into town and stop at your place at twelve thirty sharp. Good day."

Did anyone ever shed such diamonds and pearls of speech in a careless afterthought? Dazed with sudden fortune, Var stood at the window watching the portly, silk-hatted, fur-collared figure of his future patron descend the steps and enter a closed limousine; then a hand crept into the painter's and Alice's eyes sought his own. By the smile such as only lovers know, she divined the news.

"No more waiting!" she whispered tenderly. "Just you and I together, for life!"

Var left the house in a dream. J. Harmon Becket, with the entire art world at his nod, was to motor in from his country estate, thirty miles distant,

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for the sole purpose of inspecting an obscure painter's work. It seemed almost incredible.

The young man flew back to his attic studio and laughed a defiant farewell at its dingy walls. But there was much to be done before tomorrow noon. On the strength of his prospects he borrowed eighty dollars. A canvass of his friends yielded furniture, rugs and hangings enough to transform his bare room into a tasteful studio. One contributed a bronze standing lamp, another sent classical casts, a third an imposing samovar. The painter arranged these "properties" with the care of a stage manager; he bought an armful of golden chrysanthemums, of a species which Mrs. Becket herself had originated, and placed them in a great Chinese vase; he set forth half a dozen of his best canvases in borrowed frames. And he looked upon his work and saw that it was good.

Next he interviewed the janitor's wife. She was to prepare a plateful of sandwiches and bring them to the studio at noon the next day. He had a vision of Mrs. Becket presiding at the samovar; then, remembering his lack of presentable china, he ran out joyously and bought a service of an expensive quality. His studio was situated in an office building, and the elevator was closed on Sundays; therefore it became necessary to press the colored boy into extra duty.

"Frank," he explained, "I want you to be here tomorrow. Some friends of mine are coming—J. Harmon Becket and his wife." He announced the name with a slight sensation of giddiness. "They'll arrive in their motor car at half past twelve. He's a tall, ruddy man; wears a silk hat and a long coat with a fur collar. Run out, help them from the car, take them up in the elevator and show them into my studio. I'll be waiting there. Don't fail to treat them with the greatest respect. They're big people, you know. Now I'm depending on you, Frank. If you failed to come, it would be fatal."

"Ah'll come all right, Mr. Var," chuckled Frank, gazing affectionately at the crisp five-dollar bill in his palm. "Jes' you leave dat to me, sah. Ah'll

be heah in my new uniform to show dat gentleman how gentlemen ought to be looked after."

It was dusk when Var stepped lightly forth into the streets. A pattern in a clothier's window pleased his whim; he entered and refitted himself from top to toe. The sensation of shapely garments on his back was new and delightful. On he strolled through the streets which had once seemed so hard and cruel but now pulsed with generous life. Fame, fortune, love and youth, abounding youth, sang in his heart. He waved a hand at spacious, lamp-dotted Fifth Avenue and cried, "Oh, good old world!"

His next thought was of his friends. Var made a round of the studios, calling his fellow strugglers from the obscure byways of art, and bade them to a feast. Behold him, burst from his dingy chrysalis into the purple raiment of nascent fortune, spreading the news in a company of painters, at first skeptical, then delighted!

"What!" they chorused. "Not J. Harmon Becket! By the sacred pot boiler! Always knew you'd strike it some day, Artie; give us your hand!"

"I pay for everything tonight," said Var cheerily. "Come along, boys!"

They went to a little backyard restaurant where many small courses, smothered in much great art talk, made royal fare. Thin California vintages gave way to more fiery potatoes. Long before midnight Var—who had the weakest of heads—was in rose-colored clouds. Already medals of honor decorated his breast; he was a distinguished visitor in foreign capitals, and the world of rank and fashion did him honor. In response to cries of "Speech! Speech!" he mounted his chair. Golden words trembled on his tongue; he thrilled with incommunicable visions.

"Gentlemen," he began, "art is like the telephone." Then the hopeless profundity of his thought crushed him, and he toppled over sideways. The last thing he remembered was his protesting tearfully that to go home with two unspent dollars in one's pocket was a thing which no gentleman would do.

He awoke in broad daylight, with a

raging headache. He was lying in a strange studio with one of his comrades of last night asleep beside him. Gradually his fuddled brain cleared, and he realized that it was Sunday, the day of his appointment with J. Harmon Becket. Var's watch had run down, but the sun looked suspiciously high. He leaped out of bed and flung on his clothes. Once out of doors, he discovered that he was on Eighth Avenue, some miles from his studio. A neighboring clock marked the hour as twelve thirty. Sweat sprang out on Var's brow. He dashed eastward and jumped into the first cab that he met, shouting exhortations at the driver.

The man's whip cracked, the streets shot by, while the hands of successive clocks played their tantalizing tortoise race, creeping closer and closer toward the hour of one. At length the cab halted in east Fourteenth Street. Var jumped out, flung his last coin to the driver and leaped up the stairs, two at a time. On the top floor he encountered Frank standing outside the locked door of his studio.

"I didn't have no key, Mr. Var," he explained. "You jes' missed dem; dey left five minutes ago."

It was true. Everything had happened as by schedule. Mrs. Meara had brought the sandwiches at noon; Mr. and Mrs. Becket had arrived on the stroke of twelve thirty; Frank had helped them to alight and had taken them up in the elevator, only to find Var's door locked. The Becketts had waited in the dingy corridor for almost half an hour, and had then departed without a word.

Dreadfully Var unlocked the door, sank into a chair amid the mockery of rich surroundings which he had brought together and bowed his head. Every inch of the chain which he had welded so carefully to encompass his Great Chance had proved true. He himself was its one fatally weak link.

We did not see Var again for many weeks. The borrowed furnishings with which he had rehabilitated his studio were expressed back to their respective owners without a line of comment.

Eventually he reappeared among us, albeit shyer and more silent than ever. We who had learned indirectly of the *dénouement*, tried to hearten him into communicating with Becket. He flushed to the hair, laughed painfully, and turned the subject. From that day the topic was never mentioned in his presence. Knowing Var, I am positive that he did not even send the other a line of apology. As for Becket, you may be sure that he did not descend from his pedestal twice. The great collector had traveled thirty miles and waited for half an hour on the threshold of the obscure painter, who had met his patron's overture with a locked door. It was the poignant pride which is born of a profound, self-inflicted humiliation that kept Var dumb.

Miss Nelsen's parents learned the story, and measuring Var as an irresponsible ne'er-do-well, urged her to break the engagement. Instead, she rose above her bitter mortification and showed the straight, true blade of womanhood. Nobly enough—or foolishly enough, as some said—she told Var that she would marry him whenever he wished it; and married they were straightway, with scarcely one month's studio rent to their name.

Their life together was spent among art's humbler byways. Time brought a stoop to Var's shoulders, a tired, careworn look to Alice's face and children that played at her knee. Meanwhile he wrested a meager livelihood from the world, sketching for a comic weekly, instructing at the League, teaching summer classes and painting pictures in snatched moments. He dressed all but shabbily, and seemed to be forever worried and hard up. Occasionally at some function one met them, a pathetic couple; Var abstracted and dreamy, with a patient smile and a gentle, half-cringing acquiescence; his wife watching over him with the brooding devotion that a mother shows to her invalid child. For all his youthful promise, he never emerged from the great rank and file of painters. Why not? Despite truisms touching on the flame-tempered quality of genius, spirits like Var's

flourish only in the sunshine of success. From that Sunday morning he was at heart a broken man. His Great Chance had come unasked; it was not his stars but himself who had failed. Thenceforward, with the fatalistic resignation of a too gentle, self-betrayed nature, he drifted in shallows, expecting nothing.

There was not one of Var's contemporaries but knew his story. It was told and retold wherever painters congregated; he was pointed out as "the man who threw down J. Harmon Becket;" and it came rather naturally to one's tongue to refer to him as "poor old Var." Seven years slipped by, but still the conjunction that fate had once wrought so simply was not repeated; Becket and Var did not meet.

One winter's night, a few months after the Beryl Club moved into its new home, Merwin Farr, the marine painter, was looking through his mail in the reading room. Presently Arthur Var—who was waiting there to meet his wife—strolled up, and the two exchanged amenities. Presently a page entered and handed Var a card. He glanced at it, then looked up with a queer, dazed expression, his face aflush, his hand trembling. The other man perceived that he was quite unnerved, and excusing himself, left the room.

Glancing in, a moment later, he was astonished to see Var seated on a divan, deep in conversation with none other than J. Harmon Becket. It was an open secret at that time that Becket was on the lookout for pictures wherewith to augment the contents of a public gallery which he had erected in his home town in Massachusetts. And now the famous collector had again sought out the man who had slighted him so grossly seven years before! Merwin Farr almost laughed aloud from sheer good-fellowship toward his brother painter. Just then Becket spied him standing in the doorway, and waved a hand.

"Want to see you, Merwin," he called. "Wait for me downstairs. I'll be there in five minutes."

The other acquiesced and withdrew. He ran downstairs to the café, where

half a dozen men sat hobnobbing together, and smote his hand on the table.

"Boys," he exclaimed, "poor old Var's chance has come again! If Fate hasn't handed it to him on a golden salver! He's upstairs talking shop with J. Harmon Becket."

The news was received almost with acclamation. "What! No!" they chorused. "Bully for poor old Var!" "Always wanted to see it happen." "Hope J. H. B. buys him out."

J. Harmon Becket's five minutes lengthened to fifteen, and from fifteen to thirty. For three-quarters of an hour Merwin Farr awaited him, while still—so the page reported—the two men sat upstairs, deep in conversation.

Just then J. Harmon Becket strolled in. He greeted the circle and sat down.

"Didn't mean to keep you waiting so long, Merwin," he said, "but I explained the mistake to our friend upstairs, and we got talking."

"Mistake?" queried the other.

"Yes—I thought you understood. I came here to see you, not Arthur Var. Fool of a page got the name wrong and took my card to him, instead. Well, I explained the mistake, and—By the way, does he paint at all nowadays?"

Every pair of eyes in the circle exchanged glances. Someone replied that Var was always hard at work.

"Queer!" ruminated Becket. "He told me all about his family and sister-in-law—a kind of connection of mine, by the way—and about his twenty acres in Connecticut, and half a hundred other things; but he never said a word about painting—not one word!"

When the circle broke up Var had vanished. Merwin Farr, however, caught a glimpse of him and his wife leaving the club—the man whose old humiliation, secretly a-smoulder within him for seven years, had leaped up afresh at the last moment, keeping him proudly silent to the end. A trifle bowed, he was leaning on Alice's arm. She, of the brave, patient face, turned up his coat collar with a smile of unflinching tenderness, as they passed out together into the snowy night.



# LONDON UNVISITED

By Charles Hanson Towne

LONDON! I have not heard your thundering voice,  
Save in my dreams. The magic of your name,  
Your wonder and your fame,  
Your glory and your shame,  
I have not known,  
Save as the winds and hurricanes have blown  
Rumors of your wild passion to our shore.  
When will my heart beat with your iron heart?  
When will my pulses quicken and rejoice  
With your strange music, stranger than all art?

You are a monster shell that holds the roar  
Of the wild sea of life.  
So loudly rings the strife  
That even across the wastes I hear you sing,  
Faint as the murmur of a robin's wing  
Above me on a silver morn of spring.  
I hear you as a sick man hears a fife  
In a far street,  
And the faint marching of ten thousand feet.  
He cannot see the pageant in the sun,  
The flashing sword and gun;  
Only the echo of the loud parade  
Comes to his window where he dreams, almost afraid.

London, you are the heart of the wide world.  
Wrapped in gray mist,  
How you must shine at night, an amethyst  
Whose fiery beams reach through the terrible dark  
And flash to every corner of the earth!

You are a woman, with Time's awful mark  
Upon your brow. And you are foul—and clean!  
You are a harlot—and a holy queen;  
You are the terror and the joy of life;  
A desperate mistress—and a patient wife.  
O London, you are false—and you are true;  
Evil or good, I am in love with you!

## CONCERNING MARRIAGE

By Carl Holliday

*Adam lay down and slept—and from his side  
A woman in her magic beauty rose;  
Dazzled and charmed, he called the woman  
"bride,"  
And his first sleep became his last repose.*

SOME pessimist wrote that. Jeremy Taylor was an optimist, and he said in one of his sermons that "marriage is the nursery of heaven." Diogenes, however, who was another pessimist, when asked what time of life is the best to marry, replied: "In youth it is too soon, and in age it is too late;" and when requested to describe the kind of wife one should seek, said: "Choose one without a head, without a body and without limbs, for then her hands will not injure in striking, her tongue in scolding nor her body in desiring to be soiled." He saw an old fellow going to the temple for a second marriage. "Oh, thou fool!" he exclaimed. "Hast thou so lately been shipwrecked, and yet wilt needs go to sea again?" All this would seem to show that even the greatest intellects are not agreed as to the success of the ancient institution.

Now as one looks back into the good old times—say about B.C. 5000—and traces the story of wedlock up to this good day of affinities and grass widows, one is liable to cease wondering why the ancient washtub cynic had his doubts. For it is indeed often but a story of barbarous cruelty, shameless barter, beastly riot and ridiculous superstition. Marriage seems to have passed through three stages of development: marriage through force, through contract and through mutual love; and is now in the fourth and last stage: temporary marriage for convenience or social advance-

ment. As to what will follow "this deponent saith not."

In the days of "force" the barbarian almost invariably stole his bride—without her consent, too—and the process was never a sham or gentle one. To this day the Australian savage considers it beneath his dignity to court a woman. (How impossible for a literary Bushman ever to write a novel!) Instead of serenading her with a guitar or sending her love letters accompanied with chrysanthemum bouquets, he creeps with a few friends to her tent some dark night, wakes her by a vigorous prodding with his spear, twists the weapon into her knotted hair and drags her away. If she knows who the lover is and likes him, she remains silent; if she cries out he considerably knocks her senseless with his war club, removes the spear and drags her off by her heels. Despite our romances and poetry to the contrary, our early British forefathers were no less rash in their courtships. The heathen Anglo-Saxon suitor stole into the girl's home, bluntly announced his purpose and had a horse brought to the door for her. The lass was not even given an opportunity to say, "This is so sudden!" If willing, she was treated gently; if not, her wrists were bound and she was tied on the saddle. Of course the father invariably pursued; but the wise groom always had a friend ready to cover his retreat. That fighting friend is believed by some antiquarians to be the original "best man," although others claim the "paranymph" or groom's servant of Hebrew days to have been the first. Be that as it may, the father pursued, and if he overtook

the couple sometimes killed the groom or, in the cruelty of his heart, sold the fellow the girl—thus giving him a chance to repent all the days of his life that he had not chosen the other alternative.

Nor did this *habeas corpus* method of wedlock quickly die out. When Saint Augustine came to England at the close of the sixth century he found women being stolen, and even in the seventh century, Ethelbert, the convert of Saint Augustine, made a decree that any man stealing a woman should pay fifty shillings to her father and then buy her at a reasonable price. He further declared that if one man stole another's wife the first should pay the same fine and also secure a new wife for the hastily made widower. It was a day of brute force, and neither before nor after marriage was there ever doubt as to who was master; women expected no gentleness and therefore experienced no disappointment. The day of the marriage the Saxon husband hung a slipper—always a symbol of authority—in a prominent place in the new home, and near it was a cudgel. The ancient Welsh law gave a man the authority to give his wife "three blows with a broomstick on any part of her person except her head;" while the British law has never been repealed that declares a husband "may beat his wife gently"! Crab apple sauce for crabfish and a crabstick for a crabbed wife, or as an old rhyme puts it:

The crab of the wood is very good

For the crab of the sea;

But the wood of the crab is sauce for a drab

That will not with her husband agree.

Such an ancient sentiment as that or as this:

A spaniel, a woman and a walnut tree—

The more they are beaten the better they be,

shows pretty clearly the Anglo-Saxon longing for domestic peace; while Steele's statement in the *Spectator* commending a stick for some "perverse jades that fall to man's lot" indicates that the longing had not perished with the centuries.

A bad custom is like a defunct egg: it often manifests itself after it is thrown aside. As Keats would say, "it will

never pass into nothingness." Even after Christianity had abolished marriage by robbery, the Anglo-Saxon bridesmaids frequently went through the ceremony of snatching the groom from a crowd of men, while the young swains seized the bride from among the screaming lassies. Indeed, late in the nineteenth century Irish grooms often pretended to run away with the bride; while in Wales the bride and her father sometimes rode on one horse to a spot where the future husband met them, demanded the girl, was refused and gave chase. Of course, with one horse bearing a double burden, the pursuit was a short one, and the groom soon bore the girl triumphantly to the church. Elopement, it would seem, is natural to the British blood.

So much for the ancient method of force and its relics. Thus in the days of brute strength man endangered his life and that of many a friend to gain—a wife. Is it not strange that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread"?

The etymology of the name "wedding" betrays the character of the second stage in the development of matrimony. The "wed" was the money, horses, cattle or ornaments given as security by the Saxon groom, and held by trustees as a pledge and as a proof of the purchase of the bride from her father. In our day the process has become reversed among the Four Hundred—especially when dealing with dukes and counts and such hopelessly and helplessly aristocratic fellows; but even in this society the financial side of the transaction is never so flagrantly open as in ancient times. As late as the eighteenth century the amount accompanying an English bride was proudly published to the world, as may be seen in such statements as this printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*: "The Lord Bishop of St. Asaph to Miss Orell, with 30,000 pounds." The custom at length fell into disrepute and came to be classed, with forced unions, under the general title of "Smithfield marriages," so called because of the part of London famous for irregular weddings; but in the days before Shakespeare, when the

parson or his clerk announced in a loud voice from the church porch the amount given the bride and her father, it was done for the very practical purpose of having many witnesses to the contract. The amount did not vary so much as we might expect; Blackstone states that, unless otherwise declared, it was supposed to be about one-third of the husband's property.

How did the custom originate? Well, from the days of Ruth to this good hour a handsome daughter has always been considered a decidedly marketable product. The early English father, as well as the European, was never anxious to dispose of a healthy, pretty girl. The cost of her maintenance was small; she did all the domestic and much of the agricultural work, while her spinning and cloth making were a constant source of income. Her lover knew her commercial value as a producer of useful goods; he looked upon compensation as the only fair thing. Again the process is but reversed in our day. The duke looks her over; he ascertains her *spending* instead of her *earning* ability per year; he calculates the number of years before the inevitable divorce; he demands the multiple in a lump sum for taking her. Verily, there is nothing new under the sun.

But to resume. Among the early English, as today, so many bitter quarrels arose over these matrimonial contracts that laws had to be made giving exact regulations for the buying of wives. At present to "espouse" means simply to marry; but in former times the espousal was the contract of a future marriage—an agreement made by the *spousus* and *spousa*. At this meeting the future husband paid an amount known as a "foster lien" or money given for the parents' fostering of the bride through childhood; and such contracts thus consummated were considered binding until death. Of course, as in any commercial transaction, there was liable to be trickery. Sometimes a father accepted three or four "foster liens" years before the marriage, and then suddenly gave the girl to some other man. This must have been a bit surprising to the

three or four gentlemen just mentioned; indeed, they must have felt like one street car company when the board of aldermen, all the bribes being in, gives the franchise to the other company. Again, the qualities of a bride were frequently exaggerated by her father. This must have been a most ancient fraud; for far back in Saxon days King Ethelbert made a decree that if a parent made such false claims the groom might return her and get his money. For a while there was no limit to the time the husband might take in becoming dissatisfied; but, of course, this would never do. Grass widows would have become as plentiful as at a modern summer resort. The law found a remedy. An ancient custom demanded that a husband present some little gift to his wife the morning after the marriage, and a statute was passed declaring that she might not be brought back after receiving such a token of contentment.

Among Teutonic nations the breach-of-promise law is extremely old. For instance, among the early Saxons, if the bride refused to marry the groom she had to return all his presents—think of it—and her father pay back the "foster lien" and one-third more; while if the groom refused or waited two years over-time, he was compelled to release the girl for all time and lose the "foster lien." Then, too, the Church at length made it uncomfortable for the father who took too many "liens"; if he failed to present the girl the clergy demanded that he pay four times the amount. What a costly amusement a summer's flirtation at a medieval watering place would have been!

But what was the woman doing while all these transactions were going on? Nothing. Louis Vives, the friend of Catherine of Aragon, declares in his "Instruction to a Christian Woman" that a decent girl should not think of expressing any wish as to what man should be her husband! Her views on the subject were rarely requested; indeed, it never occurred to the early English that she might have any. The espousals were frequently signed for couples when they were mere infants. Eleanora, the daugh-

ter of Edward I., was espoused when barely *four days old*; while as late as the reign of William III., Sir George Downing, aged fifteen, and Mary Forester, aged thirteen, who had been espoused years before, were married, and yet hated each other so bitterly that they applied to Parliament for a dissolution of the union. The petition was rejected, and their lives were wrecked. Of course the length of waiting after the espousals was often great; but sometimes it was cruelly increased by the objection of some relative. The pathos of such delay is evident enough when we read such a notice as this in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of September, 1754: "Married September 24, 1754, Robert Phillips, Esq., of Withington, near Hereford (brother of the celebrated Mr. John Phillips, the poet), aged *eighty*, to Miss Anna Bowdler, aged *near eighty*, after a courtship of *sixty years*, the marriage having been postponed in courtesy to some relations who disapproved the match."

In former days, as we have seen, marriage was much more frankly a business matter and transaction. At present the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, and especially the furniture man, consider the bridegroom their legitimate prey; but three or four centuries ago even the state took a hand in fleecing him. In 1695 the British Parliament passed a law not only taxing all bachelors and childless widowers, but also taxing people for getting married and for having children. It caught them before and after, as well as in the transition stage. All bachelors paid one shilling per year, but a "gentleman" bachelor paid six shillings in addition; an unmarried duke over twenty-five years old, twelve pounds, ten shillings; and a wifeless bishop twelve pounds, eleven shillings. The parson, you see, was supposed to set a good example. If these luckless fellows attempted to marry, they were taxed as follows: ordinary people, one half-pound; a gentleman, one pound, two shillings, sixpence; a duke, fifty pounds, two shillings, sixpence. Then, when proud "papa" exhibited the red-faced creature that bore

a faint resemblance to a human being, his smile cost him, if he were not on the poor list, two shillings; if his yearly income exceeded fifty pounds, the "little angel" cost ten shillings; if he (the father, not the baby) were a gentleman, the tax was twenty-two shillings; and if the father were a duke, the dukelet cost thirty pounds. Twins would have bankrupted a seventeenth century nobleman, and triplets—heavens!

Even all this did not annihilate matrimony. It simply made lovers more stubborn. Early in the eighteenth century they began to organize "assurance associations," to which each member paid two shillings when joining and two shillings whenever any other member married, with the result that the groom received a good round sum the day he was shipwrecked, as Diogenes would say. Another organization caused by the taxes and other matrimonial expenses was a "baptism club," into which each member paid two shillings, sixpence when joining and two shillings, sixpence whenever a child was born to any other member, the result in the particular instance cited being two hundred and fifty pounds for the delighted *pater*. Luckily twins drew no more than a single child, else England might long since have been driven distracted with "clubs" and—colic.

The old time wedding, whether of the rich or of the poor, was always picturesque. Among the Christian Anglo-Saxons the bride was generally led to the church by a married woman and two maids, and, instead of a solemn priest and two or three assistants, the bride's father did the marrying. Even after the Danes in England had become Christians their custom was for the parent to join the couple's hands, and perform the wedding by declaring: "I join this woman to you in honor to be your wife, with a right to half your bed and keys, and to a third of your goods acquired or to be acquired according to the law of the land and St. Eric. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

But as civilization progressed, this simple procedure no longer satisfied.



Behold a medieval wedding. The bride approaches the church with her hair hanging down over her face—the origin of the bridal veil, it is said—and before and behind what a strange procession! First appears a group of beribboned minstrels merrily singing and piping; then a youth bearing the bride cup or vase of silver gilt or real silver, with gilt rosemary and ribbons adorning it. Then the bride, accompanied by two bachelors and perhaps a dozen knights and pages; then the maidens carrying “bride cake;” then girls with garlands of wheat; then the bridegroom gay in colors, led by two maidens and surrounded by the best men and his closest friends; then the nearest relatives; then other friends; and at some distance the girl’s father, sauntering along, looking indifferent and trying to appear unconscious of the approaching ceremony. What merriment, what chattering, what giggling and rallying! Suddenly there is silence; the priest stands in the church porch; the procession halts. For, according to the old, old custom, the couple are to be married not *in* church but at the door. It would be impossible to state how ancient the porch wedding is. The early Etruscans married at the door of the bride’s house; the Roman peasants sometimes did likewise. English lawyers claim that the custom arose from the reluctance of the early British to allow the Church to influence a civil institution. Undoubtedly the higher ecclesiastics constantly encouraged unions *within* the building, and the Council of Rheims demanded in 1583 that wedding contracts be made in the edifice and before the priest, while Edward VI absolutely forbade the porch ceremony; but the people loved the picturesque scene in the churchyard, and, under the pressure of public opinion, Queen Mary allowed the custom to be resumed. The Wife of Bath in Chaucer’s “Prologue” proudly declared,

“Husbondes at chirche *dore* have I had five,”

and had she lived in the eighteenth century she might have received the sixth unfortunate at the same place. Indeed, as late as the middle of the eighteenth century preachers advertised

that their churches had “beautiful porches.”

However, let us not be so cruel to our bride, who has been standing impatiently before the porch while we have been making this digression. The groom now advances to the upper step, and either he or the priest’s assistant announces in a loud voice the amount of the bride’s endowment, and hands to a bridesmaid a purse, very appropriately called the “dow purse.” How custom will linger! As late as a generation ago Welsh peasants frequently went through this same ceremony. Now comes the clasping of hands. Watch the bride. If she has never been married or espoused before, she will extend her bare hand; otherwise her hand will be gloved. Now, following the priest’s voice, they swear to cherish each other “in syknese and in hele.” Then, as the parson says, “With all my wordly goods I thee endow,” the groom places the clergyman’s fee upon the open book and throws a handful of money into a handkerchief held by the bridesmaids. The ring, now placed upon the book, is sprinkled with holy water and blessed, and the groom, picking it up with the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand, puts it upon the girl’s thumb with the words, “In the name of the Father,” transfers it to the first finger with the phrase, “And of the Son,” removes it to the second finger with the words, “And of the Holy Ghost,” and finally claps it upon her third finger with a joyful “Amen.” On her left hand, of course? Not always. In the early Christian era it might be placed upon either hand, or upon the right at the espousal and the left at the wedding.

Now the joyous hubbub arises again, but is quickly silenced as the bride, holding the husband’s right arm, follows the priest into the church up to the altar. The choir bursts forth with a psalm. The trembling couple kneel before the altar; and a canopy called a “carecloth” is held over them by four assistants. Lucky for this couple that they have never before been espoused or married; for the spreading of the carecloth is an honor bestowed only upon

the absolutely untainted. A prayer, and then a blessing upon a great mound of food, sweets and wine on a nearby table. All now try to eat and talk at the same time, and there is much coughing, giggling and confusion in general. But look at the priest! He is kissing—the groom! Another ancient custom. The groom kisses the bride, and the priest kisses his assistant, who kisses the guests. There is kissing all round. The couple are now man and wife; they will live happy ever afterward—perhaps.

Once more the merry minstrels and the choir strike up; the great beams and the dark walls with their white effigies reëcho with music; and the bride, still led by the two bachelors, and the groom, still led by the two maidens, and all the rabble, laughing, joking and shouting, gaily march forth into the village. Now occurs a wild scene. All the young gallants mount horses, and with whip and spur gallop away to the house of the wedding feast to *warn the cook*. The winner will receive a bowl of hot soup supposed to contain all sorts of good luck.

The medieval marriage banquet lasted from three days to a week. Gluttony was the rule of the day; tradition says that good King Alfred's death was caused by the effects of his wedding feast years before.

Here is where the wedding cake idea originated in England. The custom of having such a cake is world wide and exceedingly ancient. Among some tribes of the American Indians, notably the Iroquois, and among the Fiji Islanders, the new bride always offered her husband a meal cake. The early Romans broke a cake over the bride's head—a symbol of plentifulness, as were also the three ears of wheat she held in her left hand. Among numerous nations it was customary for the guests to drop wheat, flour or cake upon the wife's head, and then to eat these for good luck, and to this day the idea persists in our shower of rice. The demand for such bits of cake became so great that among the early British huge baskets of small

dry crackers were baked for every wedding, and no guest thought of departing without one. The next step in the development of the modern bridal cake was a small, square, richly spiced bun, which the guests brought to the feast literally by hundreds of pounds. These were not thrown to the bride or to the poor, as were many of the earlier crackers, but were heaped at the head of the table in one great mound, over which the bride and groom attempted to kiss each other for lifelong prosperity. Now it was that some genius of a French cook in London conceived the brilliant idea of icing the mound into one mass—and lo, the first wedding cake! The cake was divided, be it understood, by breaking it over the bride's head, whereupon all the little squares fell apart ready to be scrambled for by the hilarious guests.

The wedding feasts of former days were rough and riotous occasions. Every man at the table might ask the bride for a kiss and might even demand a dance, and the poor woman dared not refuse. As the healths went round, the talk became extremely free, and the ladies frequently fled from the table. In medieval France at the close of such feasts the men swore never to repeat any of the light remarks, and, to make the oath more binding, swore it under garlands of roses—a flower dedicated to Venus—which were hung above the table. And so today a secret conversation is *sub rosa*—"under the rose."

Thus in the good old days they married and feasted. It required a hearty race of men to survive such festivities, and especially a hearty bride to outlive the ordeal. But what sufferings, what hard ordeals, have ever kept man and his mate apart? Time has softened and civilized our people; but were the rude old customs still alive, and were the trials of the wedding day still as arduous, yet would the lovers meet at the church door and vow "eternal union" until death—or the courts—separated them. For

A woman without a man  
Was never intended since time began.

# THE GENIUS

By Marie Beaumarscheff

MADAME COURTOIS, huge and handsome, rocked comfortably back and forth and surveyed her three daughters.

There were Madeleine, Blanche and Céleste, and on the morrow the young M'sieu Théophile de Laurent would come and choose therefrom a fiancée.

Blanche was the youngest, Madeleine the eldest, Céleste the most plain; all were accomplished. Madame folded her hands complacently; life was good. The marriage portion of each daughter assured a desirable husband; what more could one ask?

Madeleine played a pensive selection from Grieg; Blanche deftly mended a hole in a linen sheet; Céleste read chaste stories about lambskins, geese and flowing rivers. All was well.

The day melted into twilight and the twilight into night. On the morrow he would come—on the morrow! An electric expectancy filled the souls of all. The atmosphere of the room teemed with it. Which one would he choose; and, also, what would he be like? For although Madame Courtois had been the intimate friend of his mother, the home of the family of m'sieu was at Rouen, whereas the Courtoises resided in Paris, and save for a photograph they had never beheld the bridegroom that was to be.

Nor was he possessed of wealth—but what of that? A young man, well born and poetical of nature, he would come, he had advised madame in a beautiful letter replete with sentiment, like Paris—to bestow the prize.

"*Quel roman!*" madame had exclaimed, reflecting upon the days when the good M'sieu Courtois had lived and

said such tender things as this. Ah, yes, to such a soul then it would be indeed a boon to confide the lifelong care of a cherished daughter. Never could such a man be cruel—never would the wife of such a husband suffer. To be regaled with poesy about daisies, buttercups, violets, brooks, clouds, moonbeams and cows—*ciell*! Such genius would be supreme.

And on the morrow he arrived, the M'sieu Théophile de Laurent, with three great trunks, a typewriter and numerous small packages. He blew in upon them like a delicate zephyr—so thin, so pale, so evanescent, as one might say. Ah, but when one is so *spirituel*, there are always such attributes of appearance to expect. He flitted before the placid Maman Courtois and bowed and complimented one and all. He explained with consideration how it was that his trunks were so heavy. He had brought much of his work to read to them, but yes—they should hear all.

As for Madeleine, later on, while she donned her simple gown for dinner, she reflected that never before had she beheld such a beard, so luxuriant and black and spreading. In her childhood she had possessed a beloved poodle, and it had looked somewhat like this—but not quite.

To Céleste he had recited a thrilling poem, the while Maman Courtois gave calm assent—some verses concerning a turtle dove and a blade of grass. As Céleste brushed out her long glossy tresses before the mirror she wondered if he fancied her to be like that—a turtle dove so full of mournful coos!

But Blanche had leaned far over her window sill in a perfect transport and

gazed out limpidly into the shadows of the night, for to Blanche had come the sweetest assurance of all. She was a gazelle—he had avowed so in the presence of her mother—a young gazelle. Her heart fluttered at the thought. It was the first time she had ever been so called.

The dinner that evening was a feast of sentiment and flowers. Learning that the young m'sieu adored lilies of the valley, madame had given orders to the effect that an abundance of them should decorate the *salle à manger*. As for the M'sieu Théophile, he had a charming poem for every course. Madame expanded with pride; she observed with pleasure the excellent deportment of her demure daughters; she endeavored to discern which one might be attracting him the most. Meanwhile M'sieu Théophile remained quite neutral; to each he was equally attentive. It would seem as if he contemplated all three.

That evening, as he bade them pleasant dreams, there was much commotion. Madame was entranced. Her daughters displayed discreet agitation. Their hearts palpitated; their cheeks crimsoned; as a matter of fact, not one of them slept all that night.

The next day and the days following all were the same. There were gay excursions, *fêtes*, entertainment continuous. And M'sieu Théophile basked in their midst, full of soft and gentle dreams, uttering airy nothings and coming to no decision whatever.

What did it matter, Maman Courtois assured herself. A day, a week, a month—all in good time. Men must not be coerced at such a period. 'Twere better far to have the appearance of *insouciant* joy, of perennial welcome unconfined, with no suggestion of the anxious heart beneath. A long visit must be expected on such an occasion and endured accordingly.

Besides, there were other matters of an edifying nature to consider. The envy of Madame Mignard, the tall, proud, hideous Madame Mignard with the gawk of a daughter, who lived next door, antagonizing madame by day and by night. And there was the curiosity

to assuage of the prying, gossiping Made-moiselles Deloir, who lived with their unhappy brother across the street, and who knew more about the affairs of their neighbors than they did themselves. And for what are daughters and sons and the arranging of marriages if not to gratify the hearts of mothers at the approach of the mating time?

It was one morning during *déjeuner* that M'sieu Théophile, as silent and full of dreams as if he had scarce awakened, alarmed madame somewhat by the far-away look in his eyes. He sipped his chocolate without enjoyment; there was a langourous air about him that smacked of malaria.

"M'sieu is perfectly well?" inquired madame with concern.

M'sieu responded that he was, but after a little declared that he would go out for the day on another long and solitary stroll—to meditate. He emphasized this with a sweeping gesture. "The birds, the flowers, the trees. I go to the park; I will absorb it all—all."

Madame beamed tolerantly; it was as well to permit him to realize her perfect amiability toward all his whims. And so he departed down the street, waving farewell to her with graceful postures until quite out of sight.

All that morning madame advised and cautioned one and all as to their deportment toward M'sieu de Laurent. New strategies must be connived—to force things to an issue. Perhaps she cautioned overmuch, but what was one to do? And as she sat thus like a seeress of old, foretelling how this and that would occur, should they do so and so, the gate clicked, and who should enter but Madame Mignard? But yes, if you please, with her gawk of a daughter, a great-jointed girl, with pale blonde hair and toes that turned forever in.

On all sides there were murmurs of inimitable condescension. The atmosphere was cold with reserve. The tension was extreme.

Madame Mignard seated herself with studied ease. She had little glistening eyes that noted everything. They did not fail her upon this occasion. Also she had a mind like a gimlet, forever bor-

ing into things and coming out all right at the end.

With Madame Courtois all was a matter of "*tant soit peu*." With Madame Mignard life was not such a continuous joy. It was true that she was not really badly settled in life, but then there was Aurore, the most impossible of daughters, a girl who was getting along in years, of a studious trend of mind, *mon Dieu*—never observing the men or being observed by them. Thus one may conclude that the seething sentiments of a mother kept Madame Mignard constantly on the *qui vive*.

Madame Courtois ordered some cooling syrups served. Delicious little cakes were also passed. With much formality the season's fashions, the new play, the opera, the coming ball were discussed.

The slim and lank Aurore, for some inexplicable reason, looked rather well. She sat gracefully, as slender women usually do, her long limbs quite relaxed, her attitude rather charming in its indolence. As for the daughters of Madame Courtois, they were all alert on the edges of their chairs as if about to pounce.

Madame Courtois prayed that her guests might soon depart. "And how do you amuse yourself now?" said she to the reposeful Mamzelle Aurore. "Are you writing any more?"

Mamzelle Aurore blushed.

"Ah, but that is now a secret," declared Madame Mignard, coming to the rescue with an air of much importance. "Aurore is now doing some work regularly. She writes for *La Feuille*—but we tell no one; it is so understood."

"For *La Feuille*!" Madame Courtois gasped with amaze. "And what does she write?"

"But that also is a secret," declared Madame Mignard; and this time she did not divulge it.

"For *La Feuille*!" mused Madame Courtois. "*Oui, vraiment*, but it is in that paper that the poems of M'sieu de Laurent, my future son-in-law, are published." And as she said it she smiled serenely, and waved her hands as if it were all a settled affair of no importance.

Madame Mignard sat up as if impaled

on a spring. "But really, madame—what a surprise! And which, daughter may we congratulate?"

Madame Courtois was as a sphinx; nothing could find her unprepared. "That also is a secret," she said, the while her daughters trembled like aspens.

Madame Mignard's little eyes darted their glances like a spider. Mamzelle Aurore paled yet more. Here was a coming marriage announced with mystery as to the bride. All was compliments, confusion and conjecture.

Later on adieux were made and departures taken, and madame again breathed a prudent sigh of relief. Of a truth it was just as well that they should not encounter the M'sieu de Laurent; in fact, it was imperative that they should not, for the malicious prying of Madame Mignard would have inspired her to ask more awkward questions, and then what might have occurred was terrible to contemplate.

But who can depend upon poets? Today they are filled with lofty emotions and soaring ideals. They are enraptured; they laugh; they sing; they sigh; they enchant with the vagaries of their temperament. Tomorrow all is different. They sit morose, perhaps observing the holes in their shoes or feeling of the emptiness of their pockets—undecided one moment, positive the next, rich in a day, poor in an hour, vehement or languid—variable always.

The visit of m'sieu dragged along, Madame Courtois a martyr through it all, listening patiently to original poems, or vivid accounts of the long and solitary rambles that he selfishly indulged in daily, sympathizing with his plans, joining his Homeric laughter or pensively regarding his tears of enthusiasm. It was all the same to her since she had so great an end in view.

But at last things verged to a rather sudden finale.

It was within a week of a betrothal fête that madame had at last decided to announce. She had decided on another thing, too. That night she intended bringing matters to a climax.

Of late the m'sieu had displayed a rabid desire for work; he had ensconced



himself in the privacy of his chamber, and reams of thought had flowed from under his pen. He had come and gone precisely as he pleased, a new fire in his eye, a new resolution in his deportment. Madame deemed it wise to approach the delicate subject while he seemed in so serious a mood. That evening he had returned quite elated. Greeting her with a fresh effusion, he flung himself into a *fauteuil* with such enthusiasm that madame feared for the springs. She stopped rocking; she reared herself stiffly upright; her bosom heaved. At last she, with her ineffable good-nature, resented all this emotionalism. It was as if he held a piece of bread to her hungry mouth every hour of the day, only to snatch it away as she was about to partake of it. Such a continual instability of character was irritating. Poet or no poet, the heart of the mother fluttered with agitation for the welfare of her own. Where were Blanche, Céleste and Madeleine? She was fatigued and they should be here—at once, to coax him back to earth. They should be sewing on household linen, playing simple musical selections—anything to divert him from these tempestuous and unsafe moods back to a wholesome normality.

The maid entered with a tray bearing some letters. Four she passed to madame and to m'sieu one. Madame politely laid hers aside on the table. M'sieu, descending to curiosity, begged permission to open his. A great ebony clock in the hall ticked noisily. Madame waited, and it was very true that she was somewhat exhausted from the continued strain.

M'sieu raised his hand to his heart, then to his head. He gasped; he rose; he stood before madame—then he sat down again. It was as if he indulged in calisthenics. Madame remained calm, solid and alert.

"But it is too much!" he exploded. "Too much, madame—this good fortune that has befallen me! How could I know or feel or anticipate that all this was to be? *Bon Dieu!* But it is all true!"

Still madame did not respond; she was majestic in her repose.

"Ah, the happiness that comes to me!" he rhapsodized. "*Ciel!* It is that I have the honor to thank you, Madame Courtois, for your so kind hospitality—for the charming companionship of your gentle daughters—for your interest in me."

"Yes—yes?" said madame breathlessly, but still inflexibly awaiting.

"By genius only are such acts of goodness appreciated above all. And today I tell you this—from the heart you understand. It is for me the grand success. My poems—*hélas*—they have been published. To you I will confide all. For you I will at once obtain a copy to bestow before departure—an appreciation from a grateful heart to you, madame, for your many great kindnesses."

"Yes?"—and the "yes" of madame was as tinkling ice.

"I come here; I dream; I am inspired; I see the publishers; I write." He mopped his brow delicately with a scented kerchief.

"It is that I am overcome with gratitude. My soul responds. Through you, madame, I have been enabled to live near the one whom I adore; such hours of ecstasy madame cannot conceive."

The features of Maman Courtois relaxed. At last the reward was coming—at last!

M'sieu bowed impressively. "Madame," he said, flourishing the open letter in his hand, "I have today received from your dear friend, Madame Mignard, an acceptance of the heart and hand I offered to Mamzelle Aurore. Ah, madame, it was she—the Mamzelle Aurore—she, who wrote the beautiful criticisms of approval about my poems in *La Feu*. And to such a woman—to such understanding—I can but offer the devotion of a lifetime."

The ebony clock in the hall ticked monotonously on. Somewhere in the house sounded the subdued voices of the daughters of madame. As for madame, she said nothing.

# THE JUDGE DECIDES

By Frank Fowell

JUDGE HALE had earned for himself a reputation as a stern judge. Not one of the new kind, always trying to find a loophole or an excuse for a prisoner, and wasting sympathy on scoundrels only fit to be locked out of the way of honest people. That wasn't Judge Hale's way, at all. His theory was that if a man did wrong and broke the law he should be punished, whether it was the first time or the fiftieth. He had no sort of sympathy with light sentences. "Downright incentives to criminality," he called them, and in his anger he almost saw decent, reputable citizens forsaking the paths of righteousness for the privilege of earning one of these light sentences. His way was to make a sentence a real punishment, and to put the prisoner out of people's way for as long as he could. If a man was innocent, there was no need for him to get mixed up in court cases. A court was for dealing with criminals, the special class he had been appointed to deal with. He prided himself that by this time he knew how to deal with them.

As he took his seat and settled his robes grimly round him a chilled silence fell on the courtroom. The wintry sunshine falling through a side window did not reveal an attractive face. Clean shaven, rather fat, with heavy, broad jaws, bushy eyebrows, a thin, hard mouth and deep, sullen eyes, it was a face to command respect but not liking. His stern voice, a little thin and high for so big a man, always had a disturbing effect on witnesses, being at once threatening and hasty, as though he did not want to be bothered listening to the next reply. Only a very cool witness was able to say all he wanted under the spur of

that impatient voice. A good many lawyers liked him, as they always like a judge more inclined to convictions than acquittals.

The courtroom had been crowded half an hour before the judge made his appearance. After all, a murder charge in the town was rare, and besides, the accused murderer was well known in the township. For years past he had been looked on suspiciously. He was much too quiet to be up to any good, people said. No one knew anything about him, save that he owned a little ironmonger's shop in the center of the town, and had always seemed to consider himself a bit above his neighbors. It was generally agreed that a man so reprehensibly reticent would be properly handled by Judge Hale. No one in the township had any doubts whatever as to Judge Hale's ability to deal with an obstinate criminal.

Presently the principal case was reached, and the judge turned a little in his seat for a look at the prisoner just entering the door. The man's appearance did not please him. There was something secretive, something not open and aboveboard about the fellow. He looked as though he had no intention of taking the Court into his confidence. Judge Hale decided he was entitled to draw certain deductions from that.

With the usual disturbance, rustling papers to be arranged, gown and wig to be put in order, and last hasty whispered consultations, the case opened. And, of course, as becomes a man who has spent half a lifetime on the bench, the opening of the case interested Judge Hale not at all. There would be plenty of time to get the hang of the business later, and

in the meantime all he had to do was to superintend some rather boring preliminaries. The counsel, a black-robed figure, standing erect, was opening the case at length; but not a word that he said entered the judge's mind.

He occupied himself in glancing coldly over the body of the court and the public gallery. In the course of years he had come unconsciously to regard this gathering of people, principals, witnesses and public alike as more or less tainted with criminality. The jury was perhaps a permissible exception. He never regarded the people in the public gallery, for instance, as an ordinary sample of the respectable civic population; while witnesses, in his eyes, were really only a few degrees more innocent than the principals in the case. He always felt that these people had by their mere presence in a courtroom put themselves under his stern jurisdiction, and required careful looking after. It was, of course, simply a habit of mind, but it was reflected rather oddly at times in his judicial demeanor. He looked them over today attentively, one by one, for sheer lack of occupation. At the left of the gallery, in the end seat of the front row, one man sat staring intently at the judge, his face resting on his hands. With this exception the people in the gallery were listening with morbid curiosity to the careful, measured speech of the counsel below.

Along its slow, preordained path, with a few formal interjections by the judge, the case proceeded. In spite of his experience, it was only with difficulty that Judge Hale repressed his impatience. He always felt that these conventional preliminaries, devised for the protection of the accused, were unnecessary. He would have liked, had he been able, to cut this slow, tiresome process short and come at once to the facts of the case. All this fuss was not needed in order that one should decide whether a man was guilty or not. However, in spite of his impatience, the customs of the court must be followed. He began turning the papers on his desk, partly to distract himself and partly to glance into the case.

A number of photographs had been

put in by the prosecution. There were two of the spot where the body had been found, taken from opposite directions, and two of the body itself. The murdered woman had evidently been about thirty years of age, well dressed and good-looking. No doubt it was the fact of the photographs having been taken after she was dead which accounted for the slightly dissipated, rakish appearance of the figure. A fifth photograph was of the woman's face only, and as he uncovered it a look of doubt or perplexity crossed his face.

He took the photographs up again and examined them more intently, quite oblivious to the impressive oratory of the black figure standing below. When he laid them down again there was no doubting the startled perplexity in his eyes. He glanced with stern curiosity at the prisoner, this prisoner who obviously did not intend to take the Court into his confidence. What in God's name had that fellow to do with this woman—*this* woman? He clutched the picture in a sudden flush of heavy anger. As he settled himself in his seat again he was oddly conscious that his sudden interest had been noticed by that dark-eyed face in the gallery at the left hand end of the front row.

He hurriedly turned the papers before him, marking in blue pencil here and there to pick out the salient points of the case. Then, hastily rearranging them, he leaned over his desk, and with one or two disagreeable interpolations began hurrying the case forward. The woman had been found strangled by the roadside, and the man in the dock was said to have been seen in her company at midnight. Once more the judge's heavy frown came round to the man in the dock. He wanted to get down from his bench and shake this sullen prisoner by the throat until he confessed what he had been doing at midnight in the company of this dead woman. There were several strong reasons why the judge would have to find that out—one very strong reason.

The afternoon was well advanced before the case had made much progress, and Judge Hale, now following every-

thing with minute attention, restrained himself with difficulty. For one thing, he wanted to get home to think; but on the other hand he was anxious to hurry the case forward. The evidence for the prosecution was not at first glance very strong. The woman had, it seemed, been drinking at a public house in the town at about eight o'clock, and had talked for a while with another woman customer. She had not said much; but it had a certain significance. She had hinted mysteriously at a visit she was to make that night, a visit to a man on whose past she had some mysterious claim. Evidently she was of the opinion that her visit would not be unprofitable, but the first inquisitive question of her companion had startled her into utter silence. Four hours later she had been seen walking near the outskirts of the town with the prisoner, and a little later she had been found dead.

From the prosecution's point of view the case was simplicity itself. True, they had not, so far, been able to prove any previous acquaintance with the murdered woman; but the cross-examination of the prisoner would be sure to give them a hint there. In any event, the case was almost strong enough as it stood. As the judge turned these facts over and over in his mind he noticed that the man in the gallery with his face resting on his hands had not changed his odd position, and still seemed to be intently studying the judge's face. This hint of surveillance was irritating, though he ought by this time, he thought angrily, to have become accustomed to being stared at. Still, there were very good reasons for his resenting it at the moment. Presently the court adjourned, and as the judge left the bench he could not resist a backward glance to the gallery. The seats were rapidly emptying; but the man in the corner had not moved, and was still watching with curious intentness every movement the judge made.

Once at home, Judge Hale shut himself in his library and sat down heavily to think. There was plenty for him to think about. For this woman, whose photographs he had recently laid down, was known to him, well known. The

visit of which she had foolishly gossiped in the public house was a visit to him. Eleven years ago this woman had come into his life, and, from a moral standpoint, had wrecked it. He had conceived for her an overwhelming passion, the dangerous passion of a big, powerful, sedentary man, and under its impulse he had forgotten everything, wife, family and reputation. The woman herself, her first infatuation past, had exploited him shamefully, had learned to play on all his impulses, to twist him to her whims and at times to threaten him with the utter collapse which must follow exposure.

His wife revered, almost idolized him. He was a model, indulgent parent, and to the world his reputation was flawless; but every now and again during those ten years this woman had come back, sometimes three or four times a year, and each time he had fallen again under her loathsome fascination. He had fought himself repeatedly, and had always lost. With a full recognition of all he risked losing, he had to admit that before this woman he was utterly powerless. She had been the only mistake in his married life, and he would have given much to put an end to these secret visits, which were now obviously inspired by cupidity. Glancing at his cashbook, he verified a date. On the night in question he had given her money in this very room, and she had apparently left him and gone straight to her death.

More than once the thought of the freedom which this woman's death would bring to him had occurred to Judge Hale. And with it sometimes had come another thought, which he hardly dared admit to himself, of bringing that death about; but he knew well enough how foolish a thing murder was nowadays, so for some years he had paid in silence. On this night he had paid her and let her out by a side gate himself before midnight, and had not seen her again.

What was to happen now? And, more important still, what had happened? Who had met her that night? How much did that person know? And above all, was there anything to come out in

this trial which would bring disaster to his career? Was he to be called on to convict a murderer who in self-defense would ruin his judge? He would have to step warily now. He passed the whole of that night wrestling with the problem.

In the morning one thing was perfectly clear. No matter what risks the case held for him, he could not afford to temporize. Any abatement of his usual sternness would inevitably be interpreted as weakness. His course of action would have to depend largely on what came out in the trial during the day. He would probably learn something of the relations of these two, might be able to involve the man in some sort of confession. The prisoner had not the manner of being a willing witness, and would not easily be led into a contradiction. Judge Hale had a double reason for forcing the truth from him. Well, they should see who was the stronger. When he took his seat that morning the grimness on his face was not lost on the courtroom. Obviously this was not to be one of the judge's funny days.

From the start he took the case roughly in hand. His rasping voice was continually breaking into the measured sequence of question and answer, snubbing this witness and threatening that. Hours were spent in tedious evidence, which, however, kept him alert lest at any instant the first hint of trouble should come. He wondered if these gowned advocates before him knew anything of his relations with the dead woman. Most of them had suffered under him. His brutal, domineering ways had brought him enemies, and he glanced from one face to another in search of any hint of impending disclosures. He could detect nothing. They did not appear to be watching him at all closely; but he suddenly became aware that the strange visitor of yesterday was again seated in the gallery in the same intent attitude and watching him as closely as before.

The discovery startled him. Who was this man? He looked at him more closely. The face was that of an old ill man with graying hair and the pallid, translucent skin of a consumptive. In this waxen

face two dark piercing eyes stood out in strange relief. The expression was that of a refined man of the better classes, of one who had suffered much, with burning, sparkling eyes giving the lie to the strangely immobile features. Who was this man who took so great an interest, not in the trial, but in the judge's conduct of the trial? There was nothing hostile in the look, nothing that betrayed tense anxiety—only a rapt curiosity. He could be no relative of the dead woman, the judge knew, for she had none living, and the father of the prisoner was also, he soon learned, dead. Perhaps it was only a curious visitor, after all, some stupid novelist on the watch for details. He forced himself angrily to dismiss the matter from his mind.

It soon became evident that the prosecution would not easily prove previous acquaintance between the prisoner and the murdered woman. The prisoner himself insisted that the woman was a stranger to him. He had met her quite by chance; a conversation had started—one gathered from his manner that the woman had accosted him—and they had walked together for five or ten minutes. After that he had left her. It was a thin sort of story, the sort of story that might be believed in the smoking room but never on principle in a court of law. Undoubtedly his manner was unconvincing. It lacked the frankness which is supposed to appeal to a jury. He resented being questioned. His whole life was raked in cross-examination, and gradually under the artful insinuations of the prosecution his assurance diminished. He had, he admitted, known a great many women in his time, had made scores of light acquaintances, many of which he barely recollected. He was not prepared to deny that some time, somewhere, he *might* have made the acquaintance of the dead woman. He had certainly not recognized her again, nor did he now recollect having previously met her.

Judge Hale listened in anxious silence. He had purposely given the prosecution considerable freedom in the cross-examination, and he hardly knew



whether the result pleased or angered him. How far was this sullen prisoner speaking the truth? A jealous, gnawing desire to find out for himself turned him with rasping voice on the prisoner. Again and again he brought him back to the one question: had he known her before? But always the reply was the same. A skillfully concealed hint to the prosecution suggested a new line of attack. Had the prisoner ever had such dealings with women as would expose him to the chance of revengeful or vindictive visits? Here again the prisoner was less confident. Under remorseless questioning he admitted that he had more than once parted from women who had threatened retaliation and revenge. His dealings with them had not, he admitted, always been of the nicest description. But he was apparently convinced that he had not at any time parted with the dead woman on such terms.

There is a curious atmosphere in a courtroom, which tends to make those who come under its influence sweep aside all protestations, all evidence even, of innocence, but set in bold relief every damning admission and every trifling contradiction. It was a simple matter for the prosecution to weld a case such as this together. Toward the close of the day under the flickering gasjets the closing speeches began. Those with any legal knowledge at all admitted that the case for the defense was poor. No one of importance could be called for the prisoner's character, and all the evidence was of a weak and negative character. But before the speech for the prosecution was more than halfway through the accused seemed lost.

Judge Hale followed the speeches with growing anxiety. He realized more quickly than any of them there the weak and strong points of the position. He had failed utterly in securing positive evidence of the prisoner's guilt. Worse than that, he had failed to satisfy himself as to the prisoner's relations with the dead woman. In spite of himself, he realized that either the prisoner was in plain truth innocent or else he was cleverer than the judge in the duel of justice. And suddenly he saw looming up

before him a new problem, before which his struggle of the night before would be child's play. He barely heard the triumphant speech of the counsel; but at each fresh point in the evidence he glanced almost apprehensively at the jury. The whole case was taking a new and disturbing turn which only he could realize. What was to be the way out?

As he glanced restlessly round the courtroom his eyes once more met those of the man in the gallery, and it seemed to him that a glance of profound knowledge, of strange intimate sympathy, passed between them. When the court adjourned again the case was almost finished. Little save the summing up and the verdict remained, and as he left the room the judge's eyes were this time fixed on the prisoner, who, dazed and hopeless, seemed to realize vaguely that these nonchalant men in gowns and wigs had busily talked away his life. It seemed to Judge Hale in that last glance that the prisoner's sullenness was only bewildered stupidity, for he had the dumb look of some animal who passively suffers without knowing why.

All the way home Judge Hale was haunted by that look. It annoyed him, and he was eager to get to his library that he might think the problem out. His own case, he saw, was desperate, and with his head in his hands he quietly balanced the odds. Quite evidently the woman had not mentioned his name, or the defense would certainly have leaped at the point. Here then was the problem. No one knew better than he the weakness of the links on which the prosecution based its case. But also no one knew better than he how damning that case could be made to appear. Unless he intervened next morning, it was almost inevitable that the verdict would be "guilty." No matter how mildly his own summing up was worded, the case would inevitably be lost for the prisoner. And, since he was by no means sure that the prisoner was not an innocent man, he might have blood on his hands. He had long become inured to the thought of punishing the guilty, and even a death sentence did not banish his sleep. But this case was different, because he had

only to say tomorrow that the dead woman's visit had been to him and the whole case would collapse.

He felt instinctively that he could never bring himself to say that.

He was under no delusions. He knew it would be impossible to confess that nocturnal visit without the whole sordid business coming to light. He had often gloated from the bench on the remorseless thoroughness with which justice in these days tears away the frail shields from a crime and leaves it a crude skeleton, like a leaf flayed by frosts and rains. He knew that one word from him would loose an avalanche of ruin. The news of that disgraceful chapter in his life would break up everything. It would probably kill his wife, who adored him as a model of honor and probity. His children would turn from him, his home would be broken, and in the eyes of the world he would be abased. His position, his reputation, the pride of place he had cultivated for a quarter of a century, all would be instantly lost. Society would forget him; his honorable friends would turn their back on him; his enemies—and he had many—would jeer at him. He would be remembered as the judge who tarnished forever the proud reputation of his country's bench. He was almost an old man now, much too old ever to recover from such a blow, and as his dull, tired eyes roamed round the luxurious room he felt bitterly that he could not be expected to drag down such ruin with his own hands. Far, far better that he should kill himself without explanation. He remembered now the strange look of sympathy from that white face in the gallery. Well, he had need of sympathy now! He passed a night of sheer anguish.

The morning found him still undecided. More than once in those dark hours he had thought of suicide; but his sterner self made him admit that suicide would be a cowardly artifice which might still leave him the murderer of an innocent man. Better boldly to seal his lips and heart and let the placid law grasp its intended victim.

The judge did not decide till, seated at the breakfast table, he looked around at

his proud wife and happy children. In one ghastly nightmare he saw them humbled and stricken. When the vision passed his mind was firm. He could not speak.

He entered the courtroom that morning with a heavy, tired step, and the first face he saw as he seated himself was that of the pale man in the gallery. To his disordered nerves the face seemed full of solicitude, of eager sympathy, as of one who had watched his struggle of the previous night and waited with parted lips to know the result. For several seconds the judge watched him curiously. He could not disabuse himself of the idea that the interest of this strange man was centered not in the trial but in the judge. There was something intensely personal in his regard, the look of a brooding mother who watches her child in some tragic ordeal. Judge Hale could hardly turn away from those questioning eyes.

Coldly, quietly, deliberately, he began in breathless silence to summarize the damning points of the prosecution. The dead woman, he pointed out, had told of a visit she was about to pay, of a visit that would be dangerous and unwelcome to the man she was to visit. Later in the evening she had been seen again; the prisoner admitted having been in her company. His story was perhaps not a very probable one; but in any case he had failed to bring any evidence as to when or in what manner he had parted with the murdered woman. Was he a stranger to her? Well, he had admitted many disgraceful liaisons in the past, some of which had ended in scenes of violence, and over many of which his accomplice might reasonably feel revengeful. What form that revenge might take they could not say. It might be a demand for money; it might be a threat of exposure. In any case, such a visit as they might imagine in such a case would jeopardize the prospects and the security of the man she visited. The prisoner had denied any recognition of the dead woman, and they were invited to believe that the woman was a total stranger to him. But admittedly the prisoner had been a man of immoral life,

had had more such intimacies than he could remember, and it would not be unreasonable to assume that, even if he had in the past had relations with the dead woman, he might have failed to recognize her in later years. Whether the woman recognized him or not they would not now unfortunately be able to discover. The incontestable facts were that, setting out on a definite mission, she had, in fact, actually met the prisoner, and that a few hours later she had been found murdered.

As the rasping voice of the judge marshaled one by one the details of this terrible indictment, the prisoner's gaze grew more haggard and despairing and he sank forward in semi-collapse. After one hasty glance at the sunken figure the judge's face set more sternly, and he turned himself in his seat so that the movements of the prisoner were hidden. He must keep that picture out of his mind at any rate. In his cold voice he proceeded to the conclusion of his summing up, but momentarily raising his eyes to glance at the clock, he saw that in his new position he was directly facing the man in the gallery. Deliberately, almost defiantly, he glanced straight into those troubling eyes, and to his sudden consternation he saw that down the waxen cheeks tears were falling steadily. Once more it seemed to him that the anguished face was like that of a loving mother who had watched her son in some tragic ordeal—and had watched him fail.

In the midst of his summing up Judge Hale stammered. His sentences broke off unfinished. He closed his eyes for a moment, but opened them quickly to escape the vision of that haunting face. He struggled to gather the threads of his address, and even as he strove he felt suddenly spurring within him the symptoms of some physical ill. The faces below him receded in a murmuring blur, and he fell forward on his desk unconscious.

When he recovered from the stroke he found himself in the judges' room, and his first dread thought was lest he should die before he could carry his resolve into effect. Even when he learned that he

was in no immediate danger, he could hardly control his anxiety. An urgent message was sent to a neighboring justice, and in the interval a second message brought the usher of the court to him.

"I want you," he said, speaking weakly from the floor, "to bring me here at once the man who for the last three days has sat in the end seat of the gallery at the front—a white-faced man with dark eyes."

Calling his assistants, the usher questioned them, but no one had particularly noticed the white-faced man in the front. One of them, however, succeeded in getting hold of a plump, garrulous fellow, and he was led to the judge's room. But Judge Hale would have nothing to do with him.

"This isn't the man," he said. "I want the man who was sitting in the end front seat at the left."

"That's where I was sitting," said the man.

"No, you weren't," said the judge sharply. "The man I saw was entirely different from you, and sat with his face on his hands all the time."

"There was no one like that near me," insisted the man. "There were three women next me in the front row. Trust a woman to get in first!"

In spite of every effort no trace could be found of the man the judge required. No one had seen him come or go, and the first man still maintained that he had occupied the end seat. When his friend arrived the judge had given up the search as hopeless.

In a few quiet words the judge said all he wished to say, deliberately took his career, his happiness and that of his family and tossed them aside as wreckage. Any attempt at concealment was thereafter impossible, and within a few hours the country was puzzling over the confessions of a great English judge. In a few days society had closed together again and there was no gap to show where one of her leaders had fallen.

The judge was carried home to face a six months' illness. He was mercifully unconscious during those first tragic

weeks in which the shame was new and scalding. When he came to consciousness it was to find that there was still some quiet peace left for him among the wreckage. His wife and children still clung to him and his heart was at peace; but the knowledge of the havoc he had wrought with those dear to him aggravated his illness, and in six months brought him to the merest shadow of himself, a weak, white invalid for the rest of his life. Slowly as the months passed he became stronger, and prepared once more to take up such threads of life as were left to him. He regretted nothing; even the misery he had brought on his home had produced some recompense in a more tender sympathy and intimacy. With his pride had gone his sternness. Suffering had ripened him to sweetness, and in the new atmosphere of love which grew around him he began to

thrill to a quiet happiness his prouder righteousness had never known.

One mild summer morning he revisited for the first time his rose garden. The tender attentions of his family in the slow journey downstairs overwhelmed him a little, and in the hall he begged them to remain a few moments that he might go out alone. He was a little afraid of his new happiness, a little ashamed lest these strange tendernesses should break him down; so, taking a stick, he set off very feebly and quietly down the long passage to the door. Just at the entrance a big mirror caught his notice, and for the first time he saw himself as he was, shattered, feeble but calm. And the thing which struck him most, which made him stagger with wonder, was that the face in the mirror was the strange, pitiful face which had looked down on him and wept over him in the courtroom.



## SANCTUARY

By Nelle Richmond Eberhart

A QUIET room have I within my house,  
 Remote, deep hidden from the trafficked street,  
 Where noise nor turbulence nor storm may beat  
 Nor subtle stir the silent soul arouse.  
 No scent, no song from blooming garden boughs  
 May penetrate the hush of that retreat;  
 Some elsewhere, to paths more thrilling sweet,  
 The rose and thrush repair to breathe their vows.

There lull the rainbow hues of living light  
 Into the still white beam of perfect calm;  
 No ghost of passion haunts that atmosphere;  
 My every thought is prostrate acolyte  
 Where, without aisle or altar, priest or psalm,  
 God whispers in the silence and I hear.

# THE SPOILING OF ROWENA

By Mary Heaton Vorse

"It is always," mused Mrs. Massingbyrd, "a revolting but fascinating spectacle."

I could see nothing more than Lester Anderson talking with some ladies at the other side of the lawn.

"You know, they won't get him, anyway," Felicia returned, "so I don't see why you should be interested in a foregone conclusion, where nothing happens."

"It's not a foregone conclusion—nothing of that sort is," protested Lydia Massingbyrd. "The awfulest things happen every day."

"And the things that ought, don't ever!" Felicia finished, with asperity.

Here Lydia broke forth:

"Well, I simply won't happen—remember that, Felicia! I'm not going to be thrown at any man's head!"

Light dawned on me; I looked at my wife with severity, for well I know it is Felicia's dearest wish to get her dearest friend what she calls "safely married."

"You're a scheming, matchmaking thing, Felicia!" I remonstrated.

Felicia smiled at me, then looked at Lydia. I followed Felicia's eyes for a moment, and allowed my own to rest on our friend with satisfaction. For the purpose of showing her lovely hair, she had taken off her lace-covered hat. Her hair was braided, and was dressed to form a noble crown for her head; there was a hint of the theatrical, as if her beauty was meant to carry a long distance; and this fantastic hint of exaggeration was one of her great charms. It gave her an accent, which placed her in a class by herself.

She swung her hat to and fro as unconsciously as a schoolgirl. Indeed, I

don't believe she knew it was not on her head; and when a woman has gone so far in social development as to forget her new hat—and even trifle with it—she's gone very far, indeed.

"You can quite see why it is," said Felicia, with her eyes on Mrs. Massingbyrd, "that I feel it's time Lydia married again."

"She is a menace to the public peace, as it is," I agreed.

"Oh, the public peace!" Felicia scoffed. "Who cares for the public peace?"

"Not you, my dear," I hastened to tell her.

"It's Lydia's peace I'm thinking about. One day she'll wake up, married to some little, impossible creature. And so, with Lester Anderson just home—"

"We'll marry Lester Anderson off to Lydia Massingbyrd before he knows where he is!" I finished bitterly, loyalty to my sex surging high in my outraged bosom.

We strolled toward Lydia and joined her and Lester Anderson. Lydia was looking up at him. Childlike anxiety was in her face.

"Do you think it fits me?"

She was, I made no doubt, referring to her gown, which fitted only too well and too much. She turned her blue eyes on Felicia, and I knew that the round, innocent gaze that Lydia rested upon Felicia meant:

"Watch me, my dear—spike your guns!"

And during the next ten minutes, with the most delicate tact, with the most exquisite sense of values and subtle understanding of character, Lydia, be-



fore Felicia's very eyes, spoiled all matrimonial chances that she might have had with Lester Anderson. She showed him the depths of her vanity and egotism, and yet sparkled so childishly and naively that she did it without repelling him. It was a masterly piece of work. Suddenly Lydia sprang forward with a glad little cry of, "It's Rowena!" and dashed to meet some newcomer.

There came forward a pair who were set apart from the general crowd, as much by their air of distinction as their oddness of appearance. The elder of the two, a man, wore his hair rather longer than is the fashion with us. His rather light eyebrows were swung with a precision as if a sculptor's chisel had done it. He seemed a man of fifty or thereabouts. The extraordinary girl with him I took to be his daughter. Her face was fuller than our standard of beauty allows—the moon face so praised by the Orientals—and yet she was beautiful. Her brown eyes, strangely shot with green, made one realize where the term "unfathomable pools" arose in the description of ladies' eyes. Her face was quite colorless but for the scarlet lips, and her transparent olive skin seemed burnished, so that it reflected light; so clear and pure was it, that it must have reflected any color she wore, even as it now reflected the curious, soft green lights from the sunlit grass under her feet.

But all these natural advantages were as nothing beside her bearing. She had a tranquil silence which would have served instead of beauty, had she been without it; an air of wondering repose she had, something withdrawn and very still, as though she were thinking mysterious secrets.

The man turned out to be Arthur Treving, a painter whose work I had especially affected, and his daughter, Rowena.

Lydia, having accomplished the social duty of introductions, slipped her arm engagingly through mine, clasped her one hand with the other, and hanging on my arm, looked up at me adorably with dove's eyes. From a distance it must have flatteringly appeared that Lydia

was saying nothing of less account than that I was her heart's own adored; but what she was saying was:

"It's the Lord's own mercy that high-waisted, close cut frocks like Rowena's are being worn this year, for something tells me that, even if we were wearing ruffles, Rowena would dress as she does! Now," she went on in tones of triumph, leaning upon me a little closer and looking still further in my eyes, "Felicia will see whether I was right or not! I knew she would be a beauty when we met her as a child; but Felicia only laughed and said: 'Heavens, Lydia! Her face is as round as any newly risen pie plate. To me she has the mysterious repose of a fat pincushion.' The child's a miracle! They must have shut her up in a roomful of white lilies, poor dear, and Luinis all around the walls.

"Such depths as she has!" Lydia went on soulfully. "But, after all, in this vale of tears a girl's got to have more than depths. We'll have to fish her to the surface—you and Felicia and I—or nobody but us will know how wonderful she is. She's more than still and mysterious; we've got to bring her out; we've got to take her in hand."

## II

THIS, with the utmost briskness and efficiency, Lydia proceeded to do. The result was that, with a few twists of her beguiling speech, Mr. Treving was made to see that Lydia's bungalow was the only possible abiding place for him and his daughter. Lydia glorified their fairly intimate acquaintance into an old and tried friendship of the first magnitude. So all of us left the Prince garden party together. It was a lovely afternoon, and we walked the short distance that separated us from Lydia's house. This dwelling looks as if it had rambled around, now going up hill a bit, now stepping down, as if it didn't quite know in its own mind where it should settle. When it decided, it grew a big, wide piazza all the way round it, over which immediately climbed flowering vines of every description. Around this charm-

ingly fantastic dwelling there are terraces and lily-bordered walks and little dusky plantations of thick growing trees, miniature forests. Part of the garden is quite classical in its Italian design, and yet with I know not what graciousness, as if Lydia had walked through one day and shaken out the too rigid angularities with deft and loving fingers, and had added a touch of her own wild grace to their formal, rhyming harmonies.

We were settled on the piazza, when down one of the lily-bordered paths came a stately white bird, and another after it.

"Oh!" cried Felicia. "You got them, Lydia—you got your white peacocks!"

"I should say she had!" replied Felicia's Aunt Agnes, on whom had fallen the arduous task of chaperoning Mrs. Massingbyrd during the summer. "They're certainly very beautiful and all that, but why a bird should make a sound like a jaguar is what I never could understand. I assure you, Lydia, that it's not that peacock's fault that I'm not now a nervous wreck."

"I've always thought what a beautiful picture I'd make standing, dressed in some dull blue, in a garden, with white peacocks about me," said Lydia.

"And then your hair would come down," Felicia suggested.

"It would be nice if it would," Lydia agreed.

Then before us appeared a picture more marvelous than any Lydia had described. Rowena was standing among the lilies, the peacocks, with spread tails, in front of her. She was slim and green-clad, like some lovely growing thing. Behind her was the background of Lydia's beautiful garden, which at this moment looked as if it had been designed from all time for no other purpose than for making a background for Rowena Treving.

I heard a little suppressed exclamation behind me, and turning unconsciously, I saw Anderson. *Rapt* is what he was, in the spectacle of Rowena and the white peacocks.

I went home, thinking that there might be some sort of a drama played in our presence before very long, for, after

all, when a man meets Lydia Massingbyrd and a girl like Rowena Treving in the same afternoon, something is bound to happen to him; and when I looked at all the other tangled skeins, which included all of us—yes, decidedly some sort of a play was to unroll itself before us.

### III

DURING the days which followed I had ample opportunity for seeing a hundred different details in the change which her two sophisticated friends were making in Rowena. Especially does one evening stand out; a party of us strolled out together to see the moon rise over the water. It was one of those late June twilights where the light hasn't gone before the moon rises.

Rowena and I sat down a little apart from the others. The background of stony hill pasture, where we were, with little groups of somber cypress trees, made a setting for her like that of some old picture, and I told her so.

"Don't say that," she urged gently. "I know I look like that, and I get so tired of it! I've been brought up to look like that, and I can't help it."

"Why don't you like it?" I asked her.

"It makes me feel so remote," she responded, "to feel as if one were something to be looked at, like a picture in a museum; and that's what I've always been. I've often, at galleries, looked at the pictures of women there and thought: 'Poor things! How you must hate the people who stare at you day by day!'"

As she spoke, she drooped unconsciously into a charming pose. Her beauty was an absolutely satisfying thing.

"You know, among the people that I've lived with," she went on after a moment, "they've always talked about father's pictures and about me, so that often I get mixed up, and don't know which they're speaking about. When they say, 'Wonderful—such a line!' I have to look to see which way their eyes are pointed. When they say, 'The

purest *quattrocento*—again, is it the picture—is it I? I never know.”

She smiled at me, a mystical smile.

“I’ve given you the tragedy of a young girl!” she said. Her voice was colored—a golden voice, and modulated in a hundred soft notes. “A young girl’s tragedy,” she fluted on, “is a very beautiful and sacred thing—like a pure white flower, is it not? I give it to you to keep.”

The rising moon struck full on her face. In her deep eyes there gleamed I know not what devil of mockery. Behind her mask little Rowena was making fun of me. It was, indeed, as if one of those infinitely wise-looking ladies, who at the same time hold the secret of eternal youth and eternal wisdom, had come down from the walls of some Italian palace and stood there in the flesh, and delicately, quite for her own amusement, had crumpled up my little tinsel compliments.

“You amuse yourself with the world very much, don’t you?” I asked her.

For a moment her smile shone out soft and radiant—and, I thought, a little laughter at me. “Think what the world would have been to me if I couldn’t have!” was what that smile said. Somehow, at that moment, Rowena made me feel very young. Beside her, Felicia seemed yesterday’s newborn babe, and Lydia a two-year infant, making a tunnel in the sand. She rose to her feet.

“I’m going,” she said, “to find that tall Prince boy, whom Felicia has given to me. He’s a wonderful boy—he’s never heard of a picture. Yesterday he told me that he had never liked a round face before.” Gravely and with a perfect gesture she kissed her hand in the direction the Prince boy might be. “Lovely youth!” she warbled. “He thinks the *quattrocento* is a game, or a musical instrument!”

So saying, she glided through the grass; but before she vanished she turned to me.

“I didn’t know how much it all bored me till I got here,” she explained. By “it all,” I understood her to mean the high, rarefied atmosphere in which her

father and his friends so perpetually dwelt.

Young Prince himself confirmed the impression Rowena had said she made on him.

“Rowena,” said this simple youth, “is all to the good! A fellow can always understand what she says. She doesn’t ball you all up like most girls do, and while she’s not an out and out ripper for looks, like Mrs. Massingbyrd, there’s something soft and pretty about her.”

Thus modern youth, in the presence of this peerless recrudescence of the Renaissance!

#### IV

Nor much time elapsed when I found myself on the piazza of Lydia’s bungalow; Lydia was sitting behind the leafy screen, engaged in the pursuit she calls “drying” her hair. In reality, at this moment Lydia gives the impression of Aphrodite newly risen from the waves—an Aphrodite who had had time to put on a becoming white frock—but the frock was almost entirely hidden by the rippling splendor of Lydia’s pale gold hair. It irritates Felicia horribly, and Aunt Agnes even more, to have Lydia dry her hair in public in this ostentatious manner. But Lydia and the rest of the world enjoy it.

There was a look of worry on Lydia’s lovely face. I may say that I never before had seen my friend with such an expression. It is the rest of the world that worries, where Lydia is concerned.

“What’s the matter, my dear?” I asked her.

She took a heavy strand of hair and held it out at arm’s length—this gesture was quite unconscious—and let it fall again in a loosened, shimmering cloud.

“It’s that wretched Rowena!” she moaned. “I don’t understand her at all! Mr. Anderson—he’s a sweet lamb, if ever a man was—gets up a party for her; she goes off swimming with the Prince boy! He comes to call; she saunters off with some other infant! Why, Bobby, that idiot girl doesn’t know the difference between a boy and a man when she sees one—and from what

she tells me, I should suppose that Mr. Anderson was the first man her eye has ever rested on—for, not in a hundred years, would I call one of those Pre-Raphaelite spooks like her father a *man*! What irritates me is that she's so heavenly nice to him when he's around—not saying much, you know, but sitting there in that still way of hers, honey dripping from her eyes, and looking up with deep, unfathomable interest until I long to spank her!"

The many, many times that we all have longed to spank Lydia Massingbyrd!

"Of course, you know," I said, "you might have let nature take its course—that is, you might have let Felicia do her darndest to make Anderson like you, and in the end nothing might have happened."

"Of course," said Lydia—there was a curious lack of conviction in her tone—"nothing might have happened. Then, too," she went on, "I could always have refused him."

"Could you?" something caused me to ask her.

"Of course!" she answered crossly; yet here again a note of full conviction failed to sound in her lovely voice, for she knew as well as I that Anderson wasn't the sort of man to whom women refuse things. He was a man who had that subtle quality which we name authority, more highly developed than anyone else I have ever known. He never emphasized his commands; he gave them out as the lightest of requests, in a take-it-or-leave-it sort of way, as if it were a matter of supreme indifference to him whether he were obeyed or not. And yet people did his bidding with a quivering promptness. Children obeyed him; his servants flew at his commands; strange dogs would come to him at a snap of the fingers. Among foreign people, races of whose language he knew but half a dozen words, it was the same, I have been told. He weighed heavy in the hand, did Anderson. Whether he was aware of his gift I am not sure.

"I didn't know," Lydia continued—she had arranged her hair by this time so that she looked like Lady Godiva; a

solid shining mantle of it cloaked her almost entirely—"I didn't know," she lamented, "that there was such perversity and guile in woman. That's what comes of doing a noble act! I take this motherless girl into my house, let her have the nicest man I've ever met, and what does she do? Spits in his eye!"

Through the open window came Aunt Agnes's voice, shocked, in remonstrance. "How can you, Lydia?" it said. "Rowena never did such an unladylike thing. She wouldn't ever refer to—to spitting! But it's perfectly true," Aunt Agnes's voice went on—it gave you a sort of uncanny feeling; you couldn't see her at all behind the curtains where she was—"Rowena's taken on Lydia's ways of doing things—and now Lydia doesn't like it."

"Does he care for her?" I asked.

"Care for her!" said Lydia. "He's mad about her—he's perfectly crazy about her! He'd marry her tomorrow—he told me he would!"

"And does she care for him?" I pressed Lydia further.

Her hands full of her lovely hair, Lydia lifted them to heaven. "Search me!" she cried, in tragic tones.

"Your hair *must* be dry by now!" came Aunt Agnes's disembodied voice. "Won't you at least braid it, Lydia?"

"No!" snapped Lydia. "It isn't dry—it won't be dry for hours and hours."

"Mr. Anderson's coming up the path," implored Aunt Agnes's voice. "Won't you come in and dry it in your own room, Lydia?" Aunt Agnes would as soon be caught with her shoes and stockings off as with her hair down.

"No, I won't, Aunt Agnes," replied Lydia bitterly. "He'll have to go through worse than me with my hair down before he gets through with this mess we've got him into, poor man!"

"You *knew* he was coming!" Aunt Agnes croaked.

"You might sometimes play the house game, Aunt Agnes," replied Lydia.

"I believe you want him yourself, Lydia!"

"Oh!" cried Lydia. "Oh!"

She sprang to her feet; her hair en-

folded her like some lovely silken garment. She ran into the house.

"I *thought* that would fix her," came Aunt Agnes's voice, complacent. "He isn't coming—not yet, I mean; but if you can tell me, Bobby, what it is Lydia *wants*—"

"What do you mean, Aunt Agnes?" I asked the voice.

"Oh, I don't know what I *mean*," returned the voice querulously. "How do I know *anything*, such little-kettle as women are in today? All I know is that ever since Lydia 'gave,' as she calls it—and a disgusting expression, if you ask me, Bobby—Mr. Anderson to Rowena—well, butter wouldn't melt!"

"Do you mean," I asked, for the second time that morning, "that Lydia's fond of him—that she cares for him?"

"I mean that since Lydia Massingbyrd could say 'Goo,'" replied Aunt Agnes bitterly, "she always wanted the things she couldn't have, and the things you gave her, no matter how much they cost, she threw down the well or out of the window."

Lydia now returned. Her hair was done up loosely.

"I'm *sure*," Aunt Agnes quavered, "that you haven't put up your hair so it will stay, Lydia. It takes you longer than that to do all that hair of yours when you want it to stay."

"Where's Mr. Anderson?" Lydia demanded, looking around.

"He—he hasn't come yet," faltered Aunt Agnes.

"Oh, he hasn't come yet! Wait, then, till he does come! You'll be sorry, Aunt Agnes, that you played me this trick."

There was just then the sound of footsteps on the gravel path.

"What are you doing, Lydia?" cried Aunt Agnes.

"Taking out my hairpins, Aunt Agnes," sweetly responded Lydia.

## V

SHE took them out, one after another, greeting Mr. Anderson quite naturally the while.

"Won't you come out, Aunt Agnes?" she fluted in dovelike tones.

"I like it better in here," came Aunt Agnes's voice.

"I had hoped to see all of you," Mr. Anderson said.

Aunt Agnes, now in a thoroughly bad temper, snapped out:

"Well, Rowena's gone out—she's gone after your peacocks, Lydia. What the good of a peacock is, that only comes home once in a while to give a yell that curdles people's blood and then makes off up the mountainside, I don't see!"

"Why, I thought Rowena was in the house!" quavered poor Lydia.

"Well, she's not," returned Aunt Agnes. "The man came around to say the peacocks had gone, and Rowena started right out. She took one of the gardeners and a maid with her. Leroy Prince went with her, too, I believe."

Lydia leaned back, sighing.

And it was at this moment that what had seemed to me nothing but a little summer comedy changed under my eyes to tragedy, for with the announcement that Rowena had gone out, and with the Prince boy, there came a change in Anderson's manner. Without altering an expression of his face, somehow he seemed stricken.

It was an awful sort of a thing to see, like peering for an instant into a man's very heart. Lydia and I failed to meet each other's eyes; and all the time the talk went on, broken in by little words from Aunt Agnes, while one realized that this big, decent man was sitting there suffering, sitting up there politely and taking his share in the conversation. One felt about him I know not what agony of suspense for that young minx with her shining moon face and big, still eyes. One could feel him waiting, and knew the restraint that he was putting on himself not to glance now and then over his shoulder, as he heard footsteps pass the house and wondered if it might be his heart's desire coming back; and it seemed to me that the flame of his torment burned Lydia as well. Somehow, I couldn't imagine Lydia in pain. She had always seemed to me a creature of sunlight, and that if anybody in the



world was to suffer, it wouldn't be Lydia Massingbyrd. But some inner knowledge in me told me that she was suffering—suffering both because Anderson was suffering, and for his reason of it, as if, in some way, at the sight of his emotion something of joy had died for Lydia.

It was as though she had some inner belief that she might at any moment, if she willed it, call him to her and make up to him for what he had suffered at Rowena's hands; and now, without any words being spoken, she knew that she was powerless, that she could never in the world make up.

Presently, "She's coming!" Aunt Agnes announced, and I went out again to welcome Rowena.

As she came up the steps and greeted us, an extraordinary thing happened. Nothing but a glance, it was, and yet to me, in the light of all that had happened, entirely baffling. It seemed as if all the spirit of the man went out in the look Lester gave her of appeal, of kindness and affection; but what was extraordinary was Rowena's acceptance of it. It may have been my imagination, but I could have sworn that she received it as a girl receives a flower from her beloved; she took it, with all it meant, and hid it away like a precious thing—and that after having performed the cruel act described by Lydia.

For through the next weeks Rowena gave to the world at large the inspiring spectacle of a young woman who slaps in the face that which every other girl of her age and set would receive gladly—in other words, the affection and attention of Lester Anderson. And more than that, she was accessible to everyone else in the world but him. There was no little college boy so insignificant that Rowena couldn't find time for a chat with him on Lydia's shady porch, no boy so shy and gawky that it didn't amuse her to go out in his canoe. She gave prodigally, with both hands, that which she denied Anderson.

Felicia alone found satisfaction in this, she told Lydia and me.

"For one incorruptible woman in the world, one peerless creature who can be

bought or bribed, look at Rowena; she's not in love, I suppose, with anyone else, and yet this miracle has character enough to withstand the bribe of wealth and of position, and even the supreme bribe of a great affection. She can even withstand the nagging worry which her friends and relatives give her. She goes along, sweet and serene and placid, giving what friendship she can to this man that she can't love."

## VI

It was but a few days after that when Felicia came to me.

"She's surrendered!" she announced. "They've corrupted the incorruptible! Of course, if you go out to smash a butterfly, you can do it, if you can catch it. I thought at last I'd found the woman in the world who couldn't be bought. But it isn't her fault; everything against her, poor darling, she gave up!"

"Kindly tell me what you're talking about."

"What I'm talking about," said Felicia, "is just this: Rowena's engaged at last to Anderson—not that I blame him!"

"Oh, don't you indeed?" said I, with fine sarcasm.

"No," Felicia pursued seriously; "he has a touching faith in his ability to make her love him. He knows he cares for her more than anybody else, and so he thinks it's all right—and of course he'll never know the pressure that's been brought to bear."

"Then, too," said I, "in spite of Rowena's preposterous goings-on—"

"I like your name for her poor little battle for liberty!" cried my deluded wife.

"In spite of her goings-on," I continued blandly, "her manner to Anderson hasn't been what you would call repellent, you know—not exactly repellent."

"Repellent in her manner!" cried Felicia. "Of course, she can't be! You might as well say a starry June evening had been leading you on, just because it hadn't got up a little private shower just where you were."

I went over to the bungalow to offer my congratulations at the happy consummation of everyone's wishes, but all was not as serene as I had expected it would be. I saw Aunt Agnes first.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish!" said she. "Mrs. Prince has been here, saying that Leroy—that's the older one, you know—you can't tell which is which, but that, it seems, is the one that especially likes Rowena—is threatening to commit suicide every minute. She's been sitting here sobbing away, and that," said Aunt Agnes, with more spirit than she usually shows, "is a sight I can't endure, because when that sort of fat, tallowy woman cries, it always makes me think of a lump of suet melting down—and that, Bobby, isn't an appetizing spectacle. She said if she'd known how he felt she wouldn't have stood in Rowena's way!"

Aunt Agnes delivered this in a tone of fine sarcasm, as one who says: "She might as well have talked of standing in a steam roller's way!"

"Don't you worry, Mrs. Prince," I said, she went on; "there's many a young idiot alive today with a parcel of children and a fine fat wife, who not so long ago was ranting around and pointing unloaded pistols at his head." And she only cried harder and said: "Oh, you don't know him! You don't know him! Oh, my poor boy, my poor boy!" I tell you, Bobby, the older I grow the more I feel that one can twist some of the old optimistic sayings around. It's a *good* wind that plays nobody *ill*, say I! And then, there's Lydia—she's worked hard all summer, hasn't she, to bring this off? Well, Lydia's up in her room crying this blessed minute!"

"And what about Rowena and Anderson?" I asked.

"Oh, Rowena's at her old tricks again," related Aunt Agnes. "She said she wouldn't see him again today—she wanted to think! So he's tramping off somewhere, poor man, I suppose, and I suppose Rowena"—sarcasm again pierced Aunt Agnes's tones—"is sitting quiet as any bowl of cream, embroidering lilies on something. There!" said Aunt Agnes. "Listen to that! Do you hear

that storming noise, like a buffalo calf? That's the Prince boy arriving hot foot!"

The sojourn with Lydia, I observed, had corrupted Aunt Agnes's impeccable vocabulary.

I went out into the hall—I had been in the library at one side of the door—in time almost to run into the Prince boy. He looked at me with unseeing eyes, and dashed past me into the sitting room on the right. Involuntarily I turned and looked after him, his flight was so precipitate. There, indeed, sat Rowena, embroidering. I heard him cry out, one youthful, heartrent cry of anguish:

"Rowena!"

At this Rowena lifted up her beautiful head and replied only his name, "Leroy!" But she spoke it as Juliet might have spoken; love and spring—yes, and passion—were in that one word and in the look she gave him, and in the hand that she flung toward him, as she sat there, still except for the one little impulsive hand, still as a painted princess.

Then, over Leroy Prince's head, she saw me in the hall and smiled at me, not a smile of defiance, but of invincible, triumphant happiness—the smile of a child who is perfectly happy for the moment and doesn't think of what's to come. This was Rowena's engagement morning.

Now, of course, one would naturally suppose that the day of joy had dawned for poor Anderson, that *his* trials and tribulations were over for a brief time, at any rate. Rowena had withheld from him, as I have told you, the favors she scattered about her broadcast. Now, of a sudden, she had given him all. As far as I could sum up the situation, as soon as he found her alone, he had asked her to marry him—and, miraculous moment, she had immediately accepted! No doubt Anderson thought her former elusiveness had been maidenly shyness. He hadn't heard that throbbing cry of, "Leroy!"

But now watch Rowena. The day after the announcement of what promised to be a happy issue out of all our afflictions, I was, as usual, at Lydia's, where Felicia and I pass much of our

time. We were gathered on the piazza in a happy little party. Lydia was especially charming to Rowena. She treated her as if she were something fragile.

Then came up Lester Anderson. He bowed us all a blithe greeting; then he asked Rowena if, with her father's permission, she wouldn't accompany him this afternoon on some little expedition. To this Rowena, beaming upon him mildly, replied:

"I should love to dearly, but I've promised to go out with Leroy Prince."

An awful silence fell for the fragment of a second, an awful silence broken by a still more awful clatter of tongues, as we all tried to bridge over the awkwardness of this surprising speech of Rowena's. Not one of us there was who could meet the eye of any other person in the company. So there we were, Treving, Aunt Agnes, Felicia, Lydia and I, all chattering as fast as we could, avoiding each other's glances guiltily, acting as if each one of us had been caught in some monstrous social fault. As Lydia put it afterward, Rowena definitely dashed the cup from his lips.

And so she continued to do from day to day. Her attitude toward him combined in a curious measure the Old World decorum which decrees that a girl shall but seldom see her betrothed alone, with the utmost effrontery of the New World. That throughout Rowena kept within certain decorous limits made the situation no easier to deal with. From the first, she had rarely gone off alone—quite alone, that is. Other young people would be of the party, and Rowena, keeping everyone in full view, would absent herself, lagging only far enough behind the others to make conversation possible. So now, it was in a crowd of people she had managed to hide herself from her affianced. When they were together she would, as it were, hide behind someone, drag in Aunt Agnes to get behind, or Lydia, or me. And the ease with which she did it, the finish, the air of not knowing what she was about!

Under the strain of the situation,

Lydia's excellent nerves showed wear, and Anderson was worn to a fiddle string. Treving fluttered around his daughter—she used him, too, as she did the rest, as a screen between her and Anderson—he fluttered around, I say, as inefficient as a bewildered parent bird.

"What on earth," I asked Felicia that night, "did she get engaged to Anderson for, anyway? She seems to like him—she didn't do it, I suppose, simply to shame him, did she, before everybody?"

Felicia looked at me speculatively.

"I don't see," she finally gave out, "how she could help being engaged to Anderson."

"It's a free country," I suggested.

"There's such a thing as a third degree, even in a free country," Felicia returned. "I thought she was going to hold out—but she couldn't! Of course, it gives me just as it does you, Bobby, a shiver to see her liking the Prince boy or anybody else better than that nice, upstanding man—but there, she does! She just isn't in love with him—she's afraid of him. And yet she can't chuck him, you see. She's got the sort of fiancé that girls dream nights about, and yet she doesn't want him—and there you are!"

And in that moment she seemed to me a pathetic child, fighting with such small weapons as she had, with subtlety and tact, for time to breathe, against forces much bigger than herself. She seemed to me at that moment, instead of a subtle young woman of many wiles, a beautiful and pathetic creature of circumstance, caught in a web of events which we had all had a hand in spinning, forced, in spite of herself, to play an ungracious part—and nature had designed her for the most gracious of all roles!

"And Lydia—" but Felicia cut me short.

"For heaven's sake, don't start in on Lydia!" she cried. "That's too tragic. If everybody had let everything alone from the first, everything would have come out all right."

And with this profound piece of wisdom, Felicia took herself off to bed.

And, indeed, I don't know that this story carries with it any other lesson in all its complex affairs of the heart than: *Leave things alone!*

## VII

You will for the next few days imagine Lydia trying to lure Rowena back into the depths from which she had called her—in other words, trying to make out of a long-eyed, still-mannered young witch a little, wondering girl, who knew nothing except that it was her lot to look like a picture and be admired like one, and whose whole duty in life was to obey her indulgent old father, as all the other little girls she had ever heard of obeyed theirs. You see, Rowena's especial form of individualistic assertion continued to be this unseemly desire for the company of Leroy Prince; for you will observe before this that Rowena's simple enjoyment of the American Youth had centered itself in the enjoyment of one especial American youth. Now it was as if she said to us:

"Well, you see, I've done the wise thing, haven't I? I've become engaged to the man I obviously ought to get engaged to. I'm perfectly willing to fulfill my part of the contract; but meantime, let me indulge my little harmless tastes—I shall have to stop indulging them soon enough."

It is perhaps at this point, as Leroy Prince steps definitely out to the front of the stage, that I should give him a more precise contour than I have. He has come to the surface with definiteness only at the moment of Rowena's electric heart cry of "Leroy!" which of course no one knew about but myself, and at the time of the peacock hunt; otherwise he has been mentioned inextricably with a number of young men of his own age and state in life. Even his being in love with Rowena, and his babble about shooting himself for this inadequate reason, made him of little more importance in the tangled skein of events in which we all were caught than did any other young man.

Prior to her engagement, Rowena had,

as I have explained, flouted her wonderfully eligible admirer, Anderson. That the elder Prince boy had, from time to time, played a part in the flouting, hadn't in any way focused our attention upon him. Even Rowena's cry: "Lovely youth! He's never heard of a picture—he thinks the *quattrocento* is a game, or a musical instrument!" was applicable to any one of his fellows. Not one of the crew of fast motoring, boat racing, bronzed and not ill-looking young men that were forever appearing and disappearing on Lydia's piazza, but would have fulfilled the Prince boy's qualification in this respect.

But at this point in the story he must emerge from the crowd. I must describe such of his qualifications for an individuality of his own as I observed, and with these I must limit myself almost entirely to exterior description.

Leroy, then, was tall and blond. Seen, as I had often seen him, in bathing clothes and running breeches, I had had ample opportunity to observe that he was covered with a full set of large and swelling muscles. His face was given accent by level black eyebrows, which seemed, indeed, to be put on with one single mark of the brush almost across his face, barely stopping for a moment to permit a straight nose to have its existence un-eyebrowed. The feature of these dark eyebrows was that which distinguished Leroy from his younger brother, and, as Aunt Agnes said, made it possible, after you had noticed it, to tell them apart. These eyebrows, also, according to Mrs. Prince, were exactly like Leroy's father's, a gentleman who had died many years before, leaving his widow and sons well provided with this world's goods.

He had left, as I say, a large and substantial legacy, and also a legacy of the spirit; for almost next to his dying words, he spoke and said:

"For God's sake, Elmira, make those two hulking boys of mine work!"

However, he must have known, dying though he was, that it was out of Elmira Prince's power to make any son of his do anything. Mrs. Prince was fond of telling anyone who would listen

to her that from the moment her husband died there was no having nor holding one of her sons. This she told partly in sorrow, partly in pride. At the time I am speaking, they were both through college, where they had done wonders in discus throwing and short distance sprinting. They proposed, I gathered from scraps of talk I had heard, to go into business in partnership the coming fall; and this they regarded not as a serious life work, but as an immense game, a sort of a continuation of the college sports, where it was just naturally up to them to sting everybody else to death.

For the rest, he had a merry laugh—it was, I may say, the only thing that would have caused me to notice him among the ruck of similar youths who formed his friends—except his ill timed passion for Rowena.

## VIII

As Leroy Prince emerged more and more from the crowd, that is to say, as Rowena spent more and more time with him, "What makes her do it?" I asked Aunt Agnes. We were sitting on the piazza and Rowena was talking to Leroy Prince on the sun dial, in plain view. Since the night they got lost, they always had been in plain view; but of course, when your beloved is sitting under a pergola or on the sun dial, or is walking up and down garden paths with a young man, you can't very well go up and ask her to come into the house and send him home. So Anderson spent not a little time talking with apparent unconsciousness to Lydia, while Rowena occupied herself as I have mentioned.

That something had to be done I quite agreed, for anyone could see that the present situation was a quite untenable one, and one which was indecorous in the extreme. The scandal spread over the countryside. Rowena's flirtation, or whatever you choose to call it, with young Prince, affronted society's sense of decency—in the face, you see, of her announced engagement with Anderson—more than I had ever known

the light-minded actions of a young married woman to do.

We all got to talking pretty frankly about it, and at that elaborate series of *tête-à-têtes* it was deemed best that Lydia should put it to Rowena that the time for breaking with the Prince boy had come; that, in view of her approaching marriage, she ought definitely to say good-bye to him and urge him to go on his way. His mother, it seemed, had urged this course of conduct upon him for long, but to her tearful urgency no more satisfactory reply was elicited than the one of "Rats!" which you will admit is rather a limited, though an energetic, way of showing your parent that you hold different opinions from her own.

Treving had shirked the privileges of a parent when it came to telling his daughter the ultimatum of the conclave.

"That's what it is," Lydia said to me bitterly—for it was from her I got the details that I have here related—"to have an artist for a father! A man—a real man—would have said ages ago: 'Don't let me see that boy show his face on the premises again—do you hear?' And now," she wailed, "I've got to do it!"

"One would think," I said, "that they had asked you to wring the necks of your own white peacocks."

"Well, so they have, in a way," groaned Lydia, but she was as nice about it as could be—so nice that it almost makes me afraid of her. "They have arranged for the execution to take place at lunch tomorrow. We're all going to motor out to the Point, Mrs. Prince and Leroy and Rowena and everybody."

"Why are you making such a function of it?" I asked.

Lydia lifted her hands to heaven.

"It's Mrs. Prince's idea," she explained. "She says we don't any of us know Leroy—that he's had exactly what he wants all his life, and if Rowena just tells him about it here at the house, he'll make a row that, apparently, can be heard in the village; but if he's taken unaware at a party, he'll be apt to be



less—well—difficult. And then, after we've told him, all of us are going to motor on for a day or two—and when you know what Aunt Agnes thinks of motors of any kind, you can imagine how pleasant it's all going to be!"

## IX

As we made our way out to the Point, I couldn't but admire the way they all carried off the situation. Every one of us knew what we were going for, except poor Leroy. We all knew that we were going to slaughter him. Rowena, she knew it; and Lydia—Lydia, who had played so fair and who was now going to kill off her last chance—chattered just as if nothing were at stake. As we went on, it seemed to me that Rowena became more and more remote, more and more like one of those painted women she so resembled.

So, as usual, my thoughts centered themselves on Rowena, and perhaps it was for that reason that a question popped out of me that I should never have asked. It happened that Rowena and I walked up the gravel path to the Point restaurant together, and my question came then of itself.

"What are you doing it for, Rowena?" I asked.

She repeated it after me, as though I had stunned her, blindly, in a voice in which there was I know not what suppressed pain. She looked at me with somber eyes.

"What am I doing it for? How can I do anything else?" she counter-questioned.

And again I asked an insane question. It was: "Why not?"

She raised her hand with a lovely, impotent gesture; in its little curve, it included all the people of our party, her father and Anderson and Lydia and Mrs. Prince—everyone, in fact, of her little world. Thus a prisoner might have indicated watchful jailors.

At last the fateful meal was over, and I am sure that we all drew a long breath when we saw Rowena and Prince, according to the prearranged schedule, de-

part together for the garden. Lydia took off Anderson; the rest of us disposed ourselves about as best we might.

At last it began to become apparent that the explanation—or the execution, whichever way you like to put it—was prolonging itself. The rest of us reassembled and searched each other's faces with looks that said, "Have you seen them anywhere?" We were all strolling up and down the piazza, making talk.

Finally Mrs. Prince said:

"I think Rowena's in the garden at the back of the house—alone. That is, I think I saw our car go down the road a little while ago."

Thus brutally did she refer to the horrid situation. There was an awkward pause.

"I think I'll go and look for her," Felicia said at last.

Again we made talk. Felicia was gone what seemed an indefinite length of time; in reality, I suppose, she wasn't gone more than ten minutes. She came back blank of face.

We all looked at her inquiringly.

"I can't find Rowena," she said.

A silence fell on us again, which was ended by the sharp ring of a telephone within, followed by a boy shouting the name of Massingbyrd.

## X

THE telephone was in the open dining room, and Lydia hastened to it. Treving followed her; so did Anderson; so did Mrs. Prince; and the rest of us straggled along like a flock of sheep. At the time, this ill bred proceeding seemed the only natural course for us to take. Under the curious pressure that foreboding gives one, I suppose it seemed to every one of us, even to Anderson, who was the most punctilious of men, a perfectly natural act to go and find out what Lydia's message was about. Indeed, there didn't seem anything else to do. It shows to what an extent the whole business had thrown us out of our usual decent orbits.

"Yes?" we heard Lydia say into the telephone, but her face flushed pink

as she said it. We all listened eagerly.

"Yes, I hear you."

"Where, did you say?"

"Oh, thank you—very kind of you; the suspense would have been trying."

"Has it happened yet?"

"Oh, I don't think we'll try to get there first, as you suggest."

"Yes, I agree with you."

"No, there wouldn't be any use."

And as she was saying these non-committal words into the instrument, I saw Anderson's hand grasp a chair till his knuckles became white.

Lydia rang off, and turning to Treving, she hesitated imperceptibly, then brought it out gravely.

"It is Leroy Prince. He and Rowena have gone off to get married. He says they're in Orchardville—so, of course, they're in the opposite direction. Quick! Let's get a motor—and catch them!"

A deathly silence fell over the whole company. Mrs. Prince was the first to recover herself.

"That was Leroy—that was 'um!" she cried, reverting to the idiom of her childhood. "And the car's not in very good order—we can catch them!"

Catch them was what we felt ought certainly to be done, and each for our various reasons. Treving went about muttering: "How unlike Rowena this is! How unlike my daughter!" until in pity for our nerves Felicia towed him out of earshot; and Anderson stood there white and set, a lost soul if ever there was one, but agreeing with the rest that we must catch them.

"She mustn't be married like that!" he muttered. "She must have time to think, at least."

"Aren't there any sheriffs in this country?" cried Treving, back again. "Aren't there any police any more? Telephone—telephone, for God's sake—

to head 'em off! Telephone descriptions of 'em—"

"Telephone," added Mrs. Prince, to whom this form of reasoning appealed, "and tell them to search the county jails, for Leroy's most likely locked up for scorching before this."

And at this emergency, I became aware how it was that Rowena had been the tremendously obedient daughter she had been. I understood, too, how authority had been relaxed in this new environment, according to Treving's notion of the fitness of things. A whole series of things became clear to me in this moment, absurd as it was, while the upper part of my mind worked accurately and I aided in telephoning.

In the meantime, tears had come to the release of Mrs. Prince. She sat there sobbing very practical directions, and saying over and over: "Leroy's so like his father! He's so like his father!"

At last Aunt Agnes, exasperated, said: "I don't see what *you're* feeling so bad for, Mrs. Prince!"

And in this hour of self-revelation, Mrs. Prince lifted up her fat, tear-stained face and blubbered out:

"Why, he's doing a dishonorable act! He's showing an awful lack of principle! Oh, I've tried to bring him up strong on principle!"

And then followed a chase which will remain with me always as the greatest phantasmagoria of my life. It seemed to me that we were hurled through space at a terrific speed, to stop at villages and ask self-contained questions about the location of a light gray motor, Number 20,177, then telephoning to the nearby towns and off again. The modern witches' ride it certainly was; and the witches rode Anderson, and they rode Lydia, too; and I sat there a silent and pretty well harrowed spectator of their agony of spirit, wondering what the devil we were going to do with Rowena and Leroy when we found them. Suppose we were in time? It was one of those situations in which one doesn't exactly see the next step.

We flashed on from one village to another, asked our questions and flashed on again, and stopped and asked about

trains and their directions, and all to no avail.

"Perhaps," Anderson suggested at last, "they *are* in Orchardsville."

## XI

ORCHARDSVILLE, I should explain to you, is a village not four miles from the Point. For Leroy to have gone there—and told us about it—would have been sheer madness. In the time that he had, in his able-bodied motor, even out of repair, he could have put a good thirty miles between himself and pursuit. The chances were that he had shot right on ahead to the city, and our only hope had lain in the chance of his having been observed shooting through some village, or having had to stop for gasoline. Orchardsville, indeed, was too simple-minded a piece of information. The lad, it seemed to me, would have shown himself more astute had he chosen a more likely spot.

Still, as we had done now all that we could do, as there had been no trace of them, and as the other car, with which we had communicated, had also found no trace of them, we might as well, on our way back, stop at Orchardsville and see if, indeed, there had been any trace of the fugitives there.

There is but one little apology of a hotel at Orchardsville, really a roadhouse which had sprung up for the use of automobiles. This is right under the shelter of a little hill, which looms up quite a distance above it. Sparsely growing grass, through which ever and anon rocks pierce, shows the poor nature of the soil. Scraggy pines and dwarf cypresses, blown by the sea breezes, give it a certain atmosphere and a rather Japanese air.

At this little place, then, we stopped, and no sooner had we alighted than another automobile came panting up, choking and sputtering. From this Mr. Treving, Felicia and Mrs. Prince alighted.

Mrs. Prince sat down hard on her chair, spread her knees further apart than grace permits and fanned herself. Tears trickled down her face.

"And by now, of course," she moaned, "Leroy's married to her! He's so like his father! If he'd only gone off with a pretty girl, I could have stood it!" she lamented. Reserve had quite gone from her. "I always thought it would be nice some day to have a sweet, pretty daughter-in-law, but a pale girl that never says 'Boo' to a goose, and who keeps her eyes half shut—"

Meanwhile, Lydia had dropped exhausted upon one of the hard little roadhouse dining chairs, and put her hand in mine for comfort, saying: "Are we all mad—are we all of us crazy?" And then, over and over: "What do you suppose has happened—what's happened?"

It was a distressing moment, although, heaven knows, we had got so used to distressing moments that one a little more so than another needn't have worn on us. But on Felicia, apparently, it did.

"We might as well go on," she said. "We might as well go home. There'll be some word some time surely from them."

"But it will be too late," Treving insisted gently. "It will be too late. My poor, misguided Rowena, she'll be tied up, don't you see, for life! She never did know how to say no to anyone—my poor Rowena! It's my training—it's my awful training! I always taught her to obey!"

We went out to the scant garden surrounding the roadhouse, and suddenly Felicia cried: "What's that?"

On the hill, quite far above us, there moved a few specks, two of them evidently human beings, and with them were two white animals that seemed strangely exotic on that wind-blown, fruitful hillside.

Lydia gazed a moment, quite motionless. Then she gave forth, in a tone of absolute conviction:

"Those are my peacocks, and that's—that's Rowena Treving with them, for she's got her hands on them, and no other woman in America would think of putting her hands on the necks of white peacocks."

"Indeed, she wouldn't!" echoed Mrs. Prince, with heartfelt conviction.

The people on the hillside had evidently seen us in our motor cars, and came slowly down toward us. We advanced to meet them. They were, indeed, Rowena and Leroy.

"There!" said that young man, with triumph. "You see! I knew what I was talking about, Rowena! I said after they'd skidoed all over the place and hadn't found us, and had telegraphed to the police, they'd turn up here where I told them we were!"

Thus spoke that young king of finance—for I suppose that is what young Prince will some day become, seeing that in his own simple-minded way he has a knowledge of how the human animal will probably act in an emergency; to know this is to be the master of events.

"We got married early to avoid the rush, you know," he further explained. There was a grin on his face, as if he'd won the hundred-yard dash. "And then we sat here quietly and waited for you to come with a car."

No one spoke for a moment. Then Mrs. Prince, practical-minded, said:

"With a car? Where's your car, Leroy—did you smash it?"

"Smash nothing!" replied her son. "I sent it home. I knew you'd think I'd taken it. And Rowena and I, we came along on some bicycles—it's a mercy she knew how to ride. There were some bicycles there and we just cleared out on 'em."

Thus did Leroy explain his simple tactics. I saw Treving wince. It seemed to him, I knew, one blow too many that his wonderful daughter, now a pearl before swine, should have eloped with a booby, on a bicycle—and eloped, too, from what would have made a peerless husband.

Leroy Prince had been holding the center of the stage, but now, for some reason, my eyes were turned on Rowena. She stood there before me, shining as if from some inner light, radiant as I never imagined such a still creature could be—radiant as if the Kingdom of Heaven had dawned on her. Her joy shone out from her like light, and I all but cried:

"Oh, my poor child—poor little Rowena! Has it been as bad as all that? Is this what trying to live up to your code has cost you?"

And quickly there came to me then a vision of how equally happy she might have been had no one spoiled her, until, as her father had said, she might have unfolded as a rose at the touch of Anderson, if the spirit of perversity hadn't been put into her.

And while I was thinking these things, the principals in this drama were all doing their parts. Mrs. Prince was weeping on Rowena's neck, and Treving shaking Prince's hand, and everybody making up right then and there, just as sensible people do everywhere except in stories; and Anderson, of course, was saying the handsome thing, and Lydia—though she had worked like the devil that day to bring his lost love back to Anderson, I thought there seemed a merrier glint in her eyes than any I'd seen in a long time—oh, since, to put it baldly, she had fallen in love with Anderson.

"So," said I to Felicia, when we were all comfortably stowed away in our own homes again, "after all, the spoiling of Rowena seems to have gone off pretty well. As far as I can make out, Anderson's the only person with a broken heart."

"Oh, Anderson!" sniffed my wife. "Have you ever seen a broken heart after Lydia Massingbyrd had mended it?"



"BEAUTIFUL view, is it not?"  
"Oh, yes; it would make a perfect postcard!"

# AVE, MOTORIA!

By Hattie Lee MacAlister

**H**AIL, Motor Car! Triumph and symbol of modernity! Thou givest a fillip and zest to life, and to existence a means, an aim and an end.

Thou pullest human society out of the rut—and art thyself pulled therefrom by the humble equine.

Thou developest to the highest state of perfection muscular instinct in the pedestrian, and permittest only the most agile to survive.

To the prayerful thou givest new cause for prayer, and to the profane new cause for profanity.

Cupid, Hymen and Pluto smile upon thee; thou payest tribute to all three.

Thou causest an increase of flesh—so that the beauty doctors and all the army of masseurs rise up and call thee blessed.

To thine own self thou art a law, and none disputes thy right of way save to his destruction.

Thy possession, lack of possession and hope of possession provide inexhaustible subjects of conversation. Thus dost thou promote the leading feminine industry.

Thou createst a new aristocracy and dost run down the old under thy tires.

Thou art the instigator of envy, malice and all uncharitableness; yet none prays to be delivered from thee.

Thou causest Dobbin to flee from the highway for the upkeep of which his owner has paid the road tax; yet in thy mercy and lack of power thou providest him with a good excuse to come back.

Thy devotees are fire worshipers, who impoverish themselves to feed thy flames, and who prostrate themselves underneath thee.

Day by day may thy triumphs be seen in the streets, yet are not thy victims dragged at thy chariot wheels. Such ancient rite would outrage modern sensibilities, to say nothing of reducing thy speed.

Thou showest the greatness of man, and his impotence before his own handiwork.

Wonderful art thou, and more to be desired than all the world—since it costeth the earth to buy thee and the necessary gasoline and to pay the chauffeur.

All hail!



# A MAETERLINCKIAN MOVING DAY

By Corinne Rockwell Swain

**S**CENE—*On the edge of a great city. A neglected lawn, enclosed by a low stone wall, with an iron gate, contains several small poplars without foliage. A cluster of tall, sickly daffodils is in bloom near the gate. The house, at the back, has a front door with long glass panels opening on a small porch, with strangely fashioned roof and pillars. A yellow cat is sitting upon the porch. The two daughters, HELEN and URSULA, and LITTLE PERCY are discovered just outside the gate.*

URSULA

We have reached the house at last.  
How alone one is here! There is no sound.

LITTLE PERCY

Open the gate! Open the gate!

HELEN

Wait! Wait! I am pulling, I am pulling—it is opening slowly. How it creaks! How it creaks!

*(They enter and stand before the house. The dog follows, sniffing. The yellow cat leaves the porch, unperceived.)*

URSULA

No one has lived here for a very long time. That is why our mother did not wish to come. Shall we not go in and find her?

HELEN

No! No! No! Did you not hear her say that we must stay outside and keep Little Percy with us until the strange men were gone and our father was calm again? There are times when he will not listen to reason. There are times when he will say absolutely everything he thinks. Many things will be said today which Little Percy should not hear.

URSULA

Yes, yes, that is true. Why is Fido barking so?

LITTLE PERCY (*bounding away*)

He sees a cat! He sees a cat! She is going up the tree!

HELEN (*sitting upon the step*)

We have never come so far out as this. It was needless to bring us so far; but our father would have it so. Listen! One can hear the voices of the young frogs in the marshes! It is not amusing.

URSULA

He was wrong to bring us here; I do not like to hear that noise. And we shall lose our friends. The old women will perhaps journey here to see us; but the young men— (*She turns her head aside and sobs.*)

HELEN

No, no—do not weep. At your age one does not despair. Try to look happier.

URSULA

Yes, yes; I will look happier. See, I am smiling.

*(A silence ensues; then voices are heard within.)*

THE MOTHER (*within*)

Take away the other rubber plant. . . . Now do not stand there with the rubber plant in your hands! It shakes! It is going to fall!

THE FATHER (*within*)

Where must I put it? Where must I put it?

THE MOTHER

There. There. In the window. On the floor. On the floor—anywhere!

URSULA

They are not happy!

LITTLE PERCY (*returning*)

I am so thirsty. I want a drink. Give me a drink!

HELEN

He is thirsty. I do not know whether there is water, although it is three days since our father sent the letter; I will see. (*She turns the outside faucet; it sobs strangely and expires.*) You must be patient, little brother. Go and play again. Where is Fido?

LITTLE PERCY

He will not leave the cat. He wants to watch the cat. I am so hungry! Give me a cake!

HELEN

The servant has not come with the basket of food. I told her to follow us; she will soon be here.

LITTLE PERCY (*suddenly bursting into tears*)

I am hungry. I am thirsty. I am not happy. I do not like it here—I want to go back!

URSULA (*embracing him*)

That is not possible. We have closed the house and given up the key. Do not cry—do not cry! Your little nose—give me your handkerchief.

LITTLE PERCY

I have no handkerchief—I have only my ball. I will play with my ball! (*He goes out running.*)

HELEN

The window! Someone is knocking at the window! It is our mother—see, she is making signs to us.

(*They draw near the window and look into the hall. The face of the MOTHER is seen through the vague veil of the dusty window. Her head is swathed in a white drapery. Her voice has a muffled sound.*)

THE MOTHER

Open the window! Open the window!

HELEN

The windows do not open. It is because of the damp. Let us all push together.

(*The window opens slowly, with a groaning noise. The MOTHER looks out long and anxiously.*)

URSULA

Oh! Oh! Oh! What is it you see? What is it you see?

THE MOTHER

A typhoid fly! It wants to go to the kitchen. It must not come in! . . . What is that sound of breaking glass?

URSULA

It is Little Percy playing ball against the kitchen window. The dog would not stay with him because it wished to watch the cat. . . . Now I think the dog is running after the hens!

THE MOTHER

Yes, yes; that is good. Too many creatures have taken refuge here. There are mice in the garret. There are rats in the cellar. There are fowls in the garden. All the cats of the neighborhood are crouching on the wall.

(*A flock of large birds pass clamorously over the wall.*)

HELEN

The hens! The hens! They are flying away! They are all flying away!

URSULA

They have all flown away, and the cat has come down from the tree. Where is our father? And where are the two strange men? It seems to me I hear angry voices!

THE MOTHER

They are talking together on the narrow staircase. They wish to move the great wardrobe up to the guest chamber, but it will not go beyond the landing.

URSULA

They raised their voices at that moment because one of them said that the wardrobe was resting upon his foot. And now—do you hear? It is our father!

## THE MOTHER

Do not listen! Oh, I am glad that Little Percy is not here. I am going to the cellar. . . . Now what was I going to do down cellar? I can't remember any more what I was going to do down cellar. I am not sure that I know anything. *(She goes out.)*

## HELEN

She has left the window open. Ah!

## URSULA

What is it? Oh, what is the matter?

## HELEN

Seven typhoid flies have gone in at the open window! What will our mother do? . . . I hear a low humming sound.

## URSULA

It is the seven typhoid flies going to the kitchen.

## HELEN

What are those heavy blows?

## URSULA

I think they are tearing the wardrobe apart to get it past the landing. When that is done, perhaps there will be peace.

## HELEN

I hear still another noise—I think it is our unfortunate father pounding his finger. Oh! Oh! Oh! What is it he is saying?

## URSULA

Oh! Oh! Oh!

THE MOTHER *(partly opening the door and ejecting the yellow cat)*

There is another entrance, down below. She was in the cellar. I struck at her—I struck at her—and she ran.

## URSULA

Go away! Go away! She is gone—she is under the step. Do you know when the men will finish what they came to do?

## THE MOTHER

I do not know anything. They say this, they say that; they say that they must go at six o'clock, and that will soon be here. But all is still in confusion. It is cold—there are no beds—there is no water—the bells do not ring—I do not know whether there will be any lights!

I wish this evening were over! *(She goes out.)*

## URSULA

Our poor mother! She is not happy.

LITTLE PERCY *(returning)*

I have broken two windows, and my ball is lost. Oh! Oh! I am so hungry!

## HELEN

The servant is coming; I see her, far down the avenue of stunted poplars. Now a man is speaking to her—a man in blue, with something bright shining upon his breast. Oh, why does she stop?

## LITTLE PERCY

I will go to meet her. Perhaps she will give me a cake! I am so hungry! *(He goes out running.)*

*(All at once a loud crash is heard within, then voices.)*

THE WORKMEN *(within)*

There she goes! Come up—up—up! Easy now!

*(There is a creaking of furniture; something heavy is being dragged.)*

## URSULA

It is the wardrobe; it has given way at last. Now there will be an end to this waiting.

THE WORKMEN *(singing within)*

"Come on and hear—come on and hear—"

## HELEN

Ah! It is the two strange men. They are not angry any more. They sing because they will soon go home. They are happy—their homes will be bright and warm—there will be food, and beds—

*(A clock, very far away, strikes six, slowly. Mosquitoes hum about the porch. A sparrow jumps upon the sill and chirps. Within, heavy steps approach the door. HELEN and URSULA cower aside as the door opens and the Two WORKMEN emerge.)*

THE MOTHER *(within)*

Oh! Oh! Do not go yet! Will you not carry up the beds? Only one bed?

## ONE WORKMAN

It is six o'clock.

## THE SECOND WORKMAN

It is time to go home.

*(They pass through the gate, singing, and disappear. The sky is suddenly overcast. A few drops of rain fall.)*

## URSULA

I think it is going to rain. Would it not be best for us to go in? See—Little Percy is coming with the servant. He is no longer sad; he is eating.

*(The doors are flung violently open and the FATHER appears upon the porch. His red hair is disheveled; his pale face is streaked with dust. With one hand he clasps rigidly his hat; with the other he makes a gesture of anger and despair.)*

## THE MOTHER (in the doorway)

Are you leaving us at such a time? You can plainly see you are needed here! There are no beds—no wood has been cut—I cannot find the key of the back door.

## THE FATHER

What is the matter with you this evening? You are not reasonable any more. We must have water! We must have

light! All the promises have been broken! It is almost night—something must be done!

*(He rushes down the steps and through the gate toward the city. The dog runs after him, but is kicked and recoils howling.)*

## HELEN

Our poor father! He is very strange today.

## URSULA

He is always so in the spring, when we change our home.

## THE MOTHER (far within)

The carved sideboard is broken—I cannot find the forks—there are no beds.

## HELEN

Our poor mother! Let us go to her!

*(They pass slowly into the vestibule, followed by the maid servant and LITTLE PERCY, who is eating a cake. The dog walks behind, with drooping tail. As the doors close after them, the yellow cat creeps from beneath the step and seats herself upon the porch with an expression of triumph.)*



## SPRING COMES BUT ONCE

By Arthur Ketchum

WHEN I was a young lad—  
And that is long ago—  
I thought that Luck loved every man,  
And Time his only foe;  
And Love was like a hawthorn bush  
That blossomed every May,  
And one had but to choose his flower—  
For that's the young lad's way!

Oh, youth's a thriftless squanderer;  
It's easy come and spent;  
And heavy is the going now  
Where once the light foot went.  
The hawthorn bush puts on its white,  
The throstle whistles clear,  
But spring comes once for every man—  
Just once in all the year.

# THE TRUNK IN THE ATTIC

*A Department for the Revival of the Art of Letter Writing*

Conducted by Louise Closser Hale

[This department ends with the present issue as announced, and the names of the prize winners follow.]

AS the hour approached for the making up of the June issue, this part of the staff—which can be best likened to the distaff—grew restless. A certain clamminess of heart possessed me; there was an added weight about my shoulders which had nothing to do with my new spring clothes; and at times I wished to run as though pursued—although such a charming reality has not happened for years.

Analyzing with surprise this last sensation—for there is very little one cares to run from these dull days—it came to me that this penumbra which was enveloping my nice heart was nothing less offensive than a sense of responsibility. Responsibility was spoiling the set of my new checked shoulders (gray and white); responsibility was pattering behind me on the pavement, desirous, for once in its life, of catching up and saying: "Good evening, would you like to walk with me?"

Yes, the time had come when the three letters most worthy of prizes should be selected, and, in the natural order of my duties, I should assist in the choice. I gave a night to thinking it over—a perfectly good night—with moonlight wasting itself on the trees in the park as I watched from my window for a solution of this subject, and the tower clock of Twenty-third Street winking red and white eyes at me that I might remember every quarter-hour that it was time to go to bed. But I put a wrinkle plaster between my brows

and stayed on until light came—with the dawn.

I was very scared about it—which means that I was scared I was not going to get what I wanted—and the next morning some moments were spent wavering between looking my best or my sickliest when I went down to the office. I decided upon looking my best, since men are men, and the results were excellent. They were more than excellent—they were chilling. For, in answer to my plea that I might be granted a short vacation in the hills while the rest of the staff picked the winners, there was that kind of hearty acquiescence which suggests sympathy engendered by relief.

Considering how much time is spent explaining ourselves to impatient listeners (waiting their turn), it is curious how we resent a correct estimate of our characters from others. Yet they were just—those editors. As I told myself severely when I hastened out at noon—a little earlier than usual, but there was the milliner to see—a woman who had once adopted the entire Bide-a-Wee Home because she couldn't decide which dog she loved most would be no person to limit herself to three letters out of a sea of good ones. Letters, too, which she had fought over and cried for until the staff had longed to resolve itself into a weapon of defense and beat her.

No, it was best that I should go to the country, and I did so, and am now sitting on a hill (a very cold one), quiet and peaceful, which is the thing I



wanted—and wondering how the electric signs are looking in New York. Before me lie the three prize letters enclosed with a few bitter words from the man I left behind me who "could name one judge who wouldn't mind a recall," and who "never wanted a seat on the bench, anyhow."

The awards are as follows—I am going to talk some more, but there may be a few greedy contestants who prefer to read the lists without further delay:

First—Love. *From a Man to an Actress*. May issue. (Name unknown.)

Second—Friendship. *To a Friend Who Asked a Reference for a Former Servant of the Writer*. April issue. (Mrs. Grace Goodman Mauran, Chicago, Ill.)

Third—Human Interest. *From a Woman Who Shrugs Her Shoulders at the Mention of Suffrage*. March issue. (Miss Frances Wilson, New York City.)

It doesn't seem complicated, does it? Yet the telegraph wires from this icy hill have been kept snapping like my steam radiator in the night as the result of the first decision. For the contributor of the love letter refuses to accept the prize, refuses to divulge her name, refuses to profit either by wealth or glory since she herself did not compose the letter which was tactfully sent her without a signature. And I, on my perch, am punished for this cowardly rustication. For while lettergrams are not persuasive, if I could just get hold of her—well, some charity would be fifty dollars richer—and I wouldn't be the "good cause" to get the money, either.

Yet it is fitting that the best love letter which has come tilting into our lists should be sent by a man who has never met, or tried to meet, the woman he has most admired, and that she who was paid this charming compliment by him shakes our modest bit of laurel from her hair, and contents herself with the Easter bonnet that her delightful husband buys her. (He should plunge on this year's offering.)

More wires—this time to the office—long distance 'phone calls. "What? . . . Hello! . . . (A dollar gone) . . . I didn't

catch that. The editors *must* decide. . . . What? . . . (Another dollar spent) . . . *No* love letters, did you say? Not surely—wire me decision. . . . All right. . . . Oh, rotten—raining. . . . Good-bye. . . . How much, Operator?"

And so I went back over the array once more with a growing conviction that those people in New York were right. Love letters are no longer for the public, and as usual I was wrong, for, while the greatest number of offerings breathed of love (which, at least, was one of my contentions), they were not the best letters, either in form or feeling or freedom of expression.

Why is this? Is it because the real ebullitions are too precious to send to us—or too dangerous to keep? I'll admit anything save that they no longer make sweet the rounds of the postman. Don't destroy my last illusion and say that love is dead. How I wish that we could have some arrangement for a telephone contest in this age! It would make wire-tapping worth while. I have watched a girl through the glass of a telephone booth smile and twist and roll her eyes as she noiselessly mouthed until I could almost see the color of the young man's hair at the other end of the line, and of course I knew what they were saying to each other.

But that has nothing to do with the redecision, for the telegram which brings the second choice does not pick a love letter at all. Rather, it brings an ache instead of a throb to the heart, for the woman who wrote the letter is dead, and before she died she cried to her friends in despair that she would never be of those whose words would live.

First—Friendship. *From a Woman to Another Woman—a Writer and a Comrade*. March issue. (Contributed by Miss Louise Llewellyn, Boston, Mass.)

A magazine is ephemeral, but we are not alone in that. Where indeed is the rose of yesterday? Even as the type which set forth her swan song is broken up, and has resolved itself into meaningless letters again, even so do our poor bodies disintegrate. But the unrest of

this one who wrote has an echo in the hearts of all who have lived. We cannot give her immortality, but she herself has achieved it when she strives with all the universe for the far goal of a high ambition. For striving never dies.

It is a distinct satisfaction, which I try to conceal, that the best letters are written by women. To be sure they sent in more. Out of the thirty-four published, twenty-seven are written by my own kind. Many of them, I regret to say, are "casters-up;" a few of them, thank goodness, are "casters-down;" and most of them expressive of some philosophy of life.

The second and third prize winners of the contest, moreover, exhibit a cheerful tone, apart from an excellence in writing, which is well worth a fifty-dollar bill. These flippant ladies should be a lesson to those given to reproaches. We have very little time for them—being busy with our own.

Besides, these two express an originality of thought which, I believe, is more highly esteemed at this period of American letters than any other literary qualification. Originality is the keynote of our country. It is ever welcome. It finds a place at the richest dinner table, sleeps in the south room at every weekend party, and secures the best cabin on a yacht in preference to any sentimental beauty or solid gold dignitary.

And yet I cavil a little at this epistle of Human Interest. I want Delilah to grant in the next letter which she makes public that a woman does not dress for man alone. Her statement looks well in print, and pleases the editors, but I ask my sisters, including Delilah, if we do not enjoy the same delightful consciousness in well fitting, delicately colored gowns and softly arranged hair that we do in the pleasing tones of our living room. And, unlike the snail, we cannot carry our living rooms around on our backs.

No, we do not claim to be higher than the angels, but Delilah must admit that our sensibilities are finer than those of the bald-headed man, and beauty in every form is dear to us. Who is the happiest woman in the world? The one with her hair done prettily, say I—yes, even on a desert island.

That will be about all for me. It is an inglorious finish, and write me down a fool, if you will. At least I have enjoyed *you*, and I reluctantly close the Trunk in the Attic, with all these comments of our sophisticated times packed therein, and hang the key on the rusty nail for posterity to find. Perhaps when they, in turn, examine the contents, they will only shake their heads over the old-fashioned notions of their granny. "Change," says Emerson, "is the mask that all continuance wears to keep us children harmlessly amused."



## A PERSIAN LOVE SONG

By John Hall Wheelock

WOULD that I might become you,  
Losing myself, my sweet.  
So longs the dust that lies  
About the rose's feet.

So longs the last dim star  
Hung on the verge of night;  
She moves, she melts, she slips,  
She trembles into the light.

# THE STAGES OF EDUCATION

By Charles Irvin Junkin

**B**ABYHOOD—He knows nothing, but is hungry for knowledge and hopeful.

THE CHILD—He wants to know everything.

THE SCHOOLBOY—He does not care to know much.

THE COLLEGE STUDENT—He knows more than his father, much more.

THE GRADUATE—He knows it all.

THE MARRIED MAN—His wife knows more than all.

FATHERHOOD—His son knows more than himself and the wife together.

OLD AGE—He knows nothing, but is still hungry and hopes for the best.



## JUNE AND THE MOON

By Emma Playter Seabury

**J**UNE and the moon and a ladder of beams,  
Swung from the sky, with its gossamer gleams,  
Swaying, the blossoms of foam to emboss,  
Tangles of skeins of its opaline floss,  
Quivering over and arching the streams.

Perfume and blooming and beauty each teems:  
Grasses, all lush in their velvety seams,  
Lacing of shadows on carpets of moss—  
June, and the moon.

Love is intoxicant with all its themes,  
Dreaming its subtle, ineffable dreams,  
Drinking its nectar, defying its loss,  
Flinging its bridges from heaven across;  
Every false note in our lives it redeems—  
June, and the moon.

# A PERFECTLY TRUE STORY

By Thomas L. Masson

**N**OTE—*There is so much widespread suspicion of authors in general, and short stories are thought to be so untrue to life, that the present author begs to inform the public that he has verified all the facts in the following. Affidavit furnished if desired.*

Early one May a family named Melburn appeared in the village of Rusk (name of State furnished on application), and after renting a modest but comfortable cottage, settled down for the summer. The family consisted first of Mr. Melburn, whom nobody seemed to know much about. Knowing him myself, however, I can positively state that he was a man of great wealth. After him followed Mrs. Melburn, young Bobbie Melburn, eleven years old, and their daughter Grace Melburn.

Grace was beautiful. *(I am positive about this, because I have observed her under the most trying circumstances—once when she crossed the ocean, and once when she had gone without a veil at the seaside and gathered a splendid crop of freckles—which, however, made no difference, so far as her inherent beauty was concerned. This is a fair test.)*

Now the secret about the Melburn family was that they were very rich and very tired. Grace, being an heiress, was of course much sought after. She had been everywhere and had seen everything—or nothing, according to one's point of view.

Under these circumstances the idea suddenly occurred to the whole family *(I have been informed about this upon the most reliable authority)* that it would be a fine thing to settle down for one summer in a place where no one knew them, and where, unhampered by

convention, they could lead a simple life.

They had, indeed *(so I have been led to believe)*, all been reading about the advantages of a simple life, and under this suggestion welcomed it simultaneously. Beyond paying their local bills promptly *(I have the authority of many tradesmen for this, receipted bills all on file)*, they had carefully concealed their wealth from the village and had endeavored to act the part of homely folks with just enough to live upon comfortably. And apparently everyone was satisfied to believe this. *(Not everybody, however, for I am bound to state that certain old ladies in Rusk, whose names I am omitting, did their best to find out the real history of the Melburns.)*

Along in June *(unfortunately the exact date is not settled, as the register has been destroyed—but it was probably either the eleventh or twelfth)* a young man appeared at the Inn as a summer boarder. His name was Thomas Elton, and he was from town. He told the proprietor he was a clerk and had come to this quiet place to rest. He had brought with him a bicycle, and rode it around the country roads apparently with great enjoyment.

The exact date of his meeting with Grace Melburn was between four and five o'clock on the afternoon of the twentieth. And it happened in this wise:

Grace also rode a bicycle *(her sixty horsepower auto having been purposely left behind, for obvious reasons)*, and in the long lane that leads back of the Baptist church she was riding swiftly along, taking this short cut in order to get to the main road, when there was a sudden

shock and what is known by some uncultivated persons as a "mix-up."

Thomas Elton was coming in the opposite direction. There was a sharp curve in the lane, where it wound around the rear of the hitching sheds. (*I have verified these topographical details.*)

Of course two persons coming in opposite directions in the same path cannot well pass each other without paying their acknowledgments to certain mechanical laws. I have every reason to believe (*though I would have it distinctly understood that I am not absolutely certain*) that Thomas Elton, after he had lifted up Grace Melburn and ascertained that she was not hurt, had cause to bless these mechanical laws, as they gave him the opportunity to meet such a beautiful girl.

The rest of the story is a natural sequence of this event. Certain explanations followed. Thomas Elton called the next day to inquire if Miss Melburn had fully recovered. She assured him in person that she had. This led to other calls, to rides, to walks in certain shady lanes (*lined with elm and beech trees—also spruce; I have seen them personally*), until Mr. and Mrs. Melburn interposed, naturally not wishing Grace to fall in love with a penniless clerk about whom so little was known.

Besides, as will appear, they both suspected that Thomas Elton knew who they really were (*as indeed he did*) and had deliberately planned his visit to entrap their daughter. They were therefore highly indignant. Scenes followed. Thomas Elton was accused of being a base fortune hunter. He admitted the charge. Then came the elopement and the subsequent— But I must give the facts in their order.

At this point I merely wish to state that, so far as my own outline of the story as given is concerned, I consulted the following authorities:

1. The village dressmaker.
2. An old lady who sits in a window opposite the post office.
3. The Baptist minister's wife.
4. The postmistress.
5. The Melburns' cook, and many others too numerous to mention.

But the story itself, or at least various versions of it, I obtained directly from those who took part in it. These versions, it will be seen, differ materially. Indeed, were I a philosopher, I should doubtless be able to prove that this story is not a story at all—for how can a thing actually happen when no two people who took part in it agree about it?

This, however, is not my affair. It is merely interesting as showing how little of the truth we actually know about the stories we read. And I am for the truth every time. There can be no doubt that the methods of our story tellers ought to be investigated. Corruption is no name for it. They have been lying and deceiving us long enough. It is a proper subject for investigating committees.

In consulting the various persons who took part in the story, I was naturally obliged to interview them separately and at such times as opportunity offered during the progress of the affair. Some of the interviews were therefore later than others in the development of the situation, but they do not materially affect the validity of the statements.

I was able to see Mr. Melburn first, on the second day after the elopement. He spoke as follows:

"I am the father of Grace Melburn. I don't see why I should be dragged into this story, as I practically have nothing to do with it beyond giving my formal forgiveness when these idiots return. The women love these affairs, anyway. My part will doubtless come in later, when I'm called upon to pay the bills. Of course I'll do it. Why? Simply because it's the easiest way out—it's moving along the line of least resistance. I never borrow trouble; I pay for it spot cash. That's how I made my money. But of course I'm sorry for Grace. She's a nice girl, even if she is my daughter. And to think she should be so fooled! Especially when her mother has been steering her around Europe for three or four years now with titles biting hard—and Grace keen enough to scorn them all. There she was, surrounded by all kinds of men-about-town, and nothing interested her until we went to this one-horse village for fun, and here comes along an un-



known chap and captures her without even looking twice. That's the way with women—never know when they are well off. On the other hand, it may be all right. Just because he hasn't money is nothing against him. I started that way. But, you see, the sad part of this thing is that he did it on purpose. Poor child! I suppose I should forgive her almost anything—considering the way she has been brought up."

The next person I saw was Bobbie Melburn. That young man, as yet unspoiled by wealth, with all those normal primitive instincts which no amount of civilization can shake out of a boy before he is at least twelve, had naturally his own version of the story. Here, I thought, was a really reliable witness, untrammelled by that atmosphere of caution and conventionality that later on serves to clog our utterance. He kindly consented to tell me the story, and here are his own words:

"My name is Bobbie Melburn. I am eleven years old. I have an auto of my own, but no one knows it, because this summer we are leading a thing called the simple life. It's fine and dandy. Goin' barefoot is worth everything to me. I have been doin' it in secret with a boy named Jimmie. His father keeps the store. We went in swimmin' yesterday and had a bully time. I can swim good, too. My sister's gone away with a man named Thomas Elton. Pa says we met all the crowned heads of Europe only to be laid low by a bunco steerer. But I don't believe that. He was a good fellow, I thought, only he made me sick making love to Grace. He an' ma talked it over, and pa said let 'em alone you fool you'll only make matters worse by opposin' them that's the way to bring it on, and ma says now Walter you know it's in the blood and she must be stopped and you must tell him not to come or I will, she says, and pa says it's nature and you'll only make matters worse, but ma wouldn't listen and she told Grace and Grace cried and he came that night and she met him by the gate. I know 'cause I was hidin' behind the hedge and she said you mustn't come agen ma has forbade it—and he says very well as you

say and walks away an' Grace wasn't down at breakfast for two whole days and she went out on her wheel and I followed and bimeby I came to a place where I saw two wheels hold each other up and I knew then he had come again. Oh, my, it was great! He was huggin' her and she was lettin' him and he says darlin' what do I care for your whole family 'cause I've found the girl I love and she says my sweetheart an' it made me laf thinkin' of Grace doin' that when the fellows in town couldn't get her to let 'em hold her hand. I know 'cause she said she hated the whole bunch. Well, I went away 'cause I couldn't stand it and ma looked spishus at supper and Grace smiled a lot and next day pa went away to town for the day an' after that Grace ran off. The postmistress saw 'em go on a train. But I liked him even if he did. He made me a dandy slingshot and I think he's alright. Pa says he's goin' to cost a lot of money, but I guess pa's got it. It's good to be poor once in a while though like this summer 'cause I can go barefoot. An' it's better to do what Grace did I think 'cause if there had been a weddin' I'd have had to put on my best clothes once more and be different from Jimmy."

It was somewhat later than this that I saw Mrs. Melburn. Naturally the shock sent that lady into hysterics. (*So I was told by the village doctor, although it is but fair to state that she declared she had never felt calmer in all her life.*) She kept to her room for several days—until, indeed, she was able to leave Rusk for their town house; for by this time she had quite enough of the simple life. It was here that she issued the following statement:

"Such a summer! Never again shall I attempt to do anything *unusual*. Dear, how noisy the Avenue is today! I can't wait to get to Italy, where at least one can sit without having one's nerves jangled to pieces. But I don't want to rest! Oh, dear no! This summer has been quite enough. And to think we should have been such fools as to try the experiment! I read about it in the paper, you know. Mr. and Mrs. Gilrist, the people who have that house on the other

side two squares down, tried it. They actually camped out in a wilderness, and he cooked the food. Imagine!

"Well, it seemed romantic, and we had had such a round. That last dinner I gave to Count Panozi fairly did me up. So off we went to that horrible village, that Bobbie just reveled in—poor boy, he isn't old enough yet to know better—but it did him good—if his feet ever recover their natural condition—off we went, I say, and met our tragedy. Poor child! I feel awfully sad for her at times. It does seem like fate! I never see a bicycle that it doesn't give me a queer, sinking feeling about the heart. Walter actually jokes about it. He said yesterday that they had been thrown together. How ghastly! Just think, after all her experience—and she's had me for a guide—Grace didn't seem to realize that young man was after her money. Why, he practically admitted it himself. For no one but myself—not even Walter—has known up to this time of that interview I had with him. It was the day after I had asked Grace not to see him—for I finally took that stand and I met him. How strange I never thought of it before, but it was in that same lane back of the Baptist church—where he first ran into Grace! He bowed as we passed. I must say he has decent manners. But then so has a floorwalker. I turned back. 'Pardon me,' I said; 'Mr. Elton, I have a favor to ask of you.' 'Certainly,' he replied.

"Do you know who I am?" I asked.

"A most beautiful and charming woman," he replied. I looked up and saw that crude person, the Baptist minister's wife, gazing at me from behind a shutter. It really made me nervous.

"Come now," I said sharply, "let us be honest with each other. I have to request that you will have no more to do with my daughter Grace."

"I'm sorry," the presumptuous fellow replied—imagine! "But with or without your leave, madam, I'm going to marry her."

"We know nothing about you," I replied severely. And what do you suppose he said?

"So much the better," he said, "for if

you did, you wouldn't consider me for a minute.' Imagine!

"Of course, after that, what was the use? I saw through him at once. If he had been a foreigner, he would have been diplomatic about it. But your American—when he is after anything—he is always impossible!

"He had made up his mind to have Grace. He had heard of us, had come there for that deliberate purpose, had counted on the surroundings and everything to help him, and he just didn't propose to be thwarted. Horrible, isn't it? Imagine!

"I talked to Grace after that, just a dear motherly talk, and told her everything; and she listened. But she never said a word, although I really thought I had impressed her. After that she ate scarcely a thing for two whole days—and then—came the end. They were gone before we knew it."

And Grace! Some no doubt will contend that—if this is a story—she is the principal person in it. And yet each one who furnished a statement has, strange to say, thought that he or she was!

Of course Grace was away. And think of disturbing a person on the most important journey of her life!

Naturally one had to wait until her return. But the time came at last, and with it, her own version:

"My name now, I am so happy to say, is Grace Elton—née Melburn, as the society notes have it. My one regret about it is that sometimes I wish I might have had a wedding—a real wedding. I suppose, after all, it was natural for every girl in her heart to feel that way; and I am a good deal like other girls, I hope. Dear papa! He was really worried about me for a time, I know, because he thought—well, he ought to have known me better—but what a splendid old dear he was to send me that telegram saying that he could stand it if I could! That showed somehow deep down in his heart—I wonder why?—that he hadn't lost all faith in me, that he still trusted me. As if I didn't know what I was about! As if I didn't make Tom show his credentials! As if—

"Poor mamma! She will get over it,

of course. I don't believe in her heart she ever really wanted me to marry a foreigner. But she was ambitious for me—naturally, with all papa's money!

"I sometimes feel that I am not up to it all myself—not that I don't like it—not that I wouldn't miss it if I didn't have it—but—well, I try to be sensible in spite of it all. It was fate that we met—I know that now.

"To think that mamma should be struck with that queer idea of leading a simple life! But I suppose she wanted a new sensation.

"And to think that Tom—

"It was awfully funny, our coming together on those wheels! How I laugh when I think of it! But I forget that you don't know the story.

"It is really quite simple. We came—papa and mamma and Bob and I—to this country village just to have a quiet, simple time. And we lived in the dearest, simplest manner. One day Tom just ran into me. How angry I was! But it was my fault, of course; I was on the wrong side.

"Somehow, after we had talked I seemed to have known him ever so long—longer than any man I had ever met. He told me all about himself—how he, too, like ourselves, had thought of the same thing—wasn't it strange that we had never met? But then you know he is an American, and we've been abroad so much. He told me about his family, about his life, his yacht, his motor cars, how tired he was of all of them, and how he had come there to be alone where no one knew him. And I believed him. Then, when I was going to tell mamma and papa, they just couldn't wait—and they forbade Tom coming, and at first he was mad. But afterward we made up our minds we'd just get married in spite of them, and let them believe he was a fortune hunter instead of being as well off as we are.

"When mamma heard yesterday who Tom really was, and that we were to live

in town and not be dependent, why, she was quite different. As for papa, he slapped Tom on the back and said: 'Well, my boy, all I can say is this: I'm glad you were not in six-cylinder motor cars when you met back of the Baptist church. There wouldn't have been so much real romance in it then, eh?'"

Now as for that other remaining person, I must confess it was difficult to get anything out of him. He said he was too happy. But after some persuasion, he consented to make the following statement:

"I don't count. I am only the lover, you know. Grace told me yesterday that she was convinced we had both made a mistake—that we ought to have explained, and given her the opportunity to have a real wedding. And I told her the only trouble with us was that we both had wheels. That shows the effect of a honeymoon on a man's mind. But, really, I think I did a little better when I saw Grace's mother. We went to see her yesterday, you know, like dutiful children. And after we had kissed and made up, she turned suddenly and said:

"'Look here, young man, I have a bone to pick with you. That day, you remember, when we met in the lane, what did you mean, sir, when in reply to my remark that we knew nothing about you, you said so much the better, for if I did I wouldn't consider you for a moment—what did you mean?'"

"And I laughed in reply as I put my arm around the dear old lady.

"'Simply this,' I replied: 'that I was a good, clean American citizen, with nothing to recommend me except that I could support a wife in the style to which she had been accustomed. But please forgive me, for that was only a joke.'

"And I think she did forgive me, although she was silent for a time afterward."

*(Authentic clipping of marriage notice will be sent on request.)*



NEVER put a gift cigar in the mouth.

# THE CASUAL PHILOSOPHER

By H. E. Zimmerman

**P**ENURIOUS men are best at guessing conundrums, because they hate to give up anything.

There's many a slip after the cup has been to the lip.

People in glass houses don't want any neighbors within a stone's throw.

Who can't be cured should be insured.

Some men can't be bought, but they can be sold.

A pool and its money are soon parted.

Appearances may be deceitful, but disappearances are not.



# IMAGINATION

By Mahlon Leonard Fisher

**I**T rears fair castle walls where childish eyes  
May gaze on them all day and all day long;  
It peoples antique streets; with shout and song,  
It wakes to life the dust that in them lies.  
From every sunset crest its pennon flies;  
On every moonlit stream its phantom fleets,  
Like old armadas, glide; where Midnight meets  
The Sea in dream, its ivory islands rise.

It is the Poet's rod and staff; it stands  
Beside him while he gropes in grewsome space;  
It shows him Love and lights her sweetheart face;  
It lets him touch, in love, her sweetheart hands.  
It gives him stars, at last—oh, long star quest—  
For him to clasp, like lilies, 'gainst his breast.

# WHO'S WHO IN WAGNER

By John Kendrick Bangs

**T**HE WALKYRIES—Lady Rough Riders of Valhalla. Sisters to Brunhilde, answering to names of Helmwig and Gerhilde, sopranos; Waltraute, Ortlinde, Siegrune and Rosseweisse, mezzos; Grimmerde and Schwertleite, contraltos. Waltraute famous as first chorus girl to be entrusted with a spoken line. Charter members of the Woman's Improvement Society of the Gods. Double ladies' quartette under leadership of Brunhilde, and most successful showgirls of the Ring. Expert high fliers in difficult skyscraping acts, and renowned rather for team play than for solo action. Of a nervous temperament, going up in the air on the slightest provocation, and sometimes without any. Founders of the Spinsters' Aid Society. Never married, and therefore still open to engagement. Recreations, nervous hysteria and jumping scales on horseback. Address, Maidens' Rest, Valkyrie Mews, Valhalla.

**SIEGFRIED**—Hero and *enfant terrible* of the Nibelungen Ring. Family tree somewhat tangled in its upper branches. Through marriage with his Aunt Brunhilde became son-in-law to his grandfather Wotan, and therefore his own uncle, although already his own first cousin by birth, his father and mother, Siegmund and Sieglinde, being brother and sister, thereby making him the offspring of his aunt on one side and his uncle on the other, or the nephew of his own parents. Later, through the enforced marriage of his bride Brunhilde to Gunther, brother to his second wife Gutrune, he became his own brother-in-law, a complication which added to the others finally carried him off. Most pop-

ular and vigorous tenor in the Ring Opera Company, receiving sometimes as high as twenty-five hundred dollars a night for a single performance. Born at the Brunhilde Hospital for the Hopelessly Involved, and consigned immediately to the Nibelheim Asylum for Unclaimed Orphans, under the management of Mime, the first recorded baby farmer in history. Brought up by the latter as a paragon of all the virtues which his foster father did not possess. Varied his youthful studies in blacksmithing and woodcraft by thrashing his kind protector daily, and playfully snapping in two the sword Nothung, the pieces of which he had inherited, and which Mime had repeatedly endeavored to weld together after its original fracture in the Hunding-Siegmund fight. Though grandson of Wotan, had no social standing, owing to the erasure of his parents' names from the visiting list of Fricka, leader of the Valhalla Four Hundred. Was consequently without fear, having nothing to lose that gossip could take away from him. While still a youth succeeded because of his fearless nature in rewelding his deceased father's broken weapon, at the same time displaying extraordinary musical talent in the improvisation, while blowing the bellows, of "The Song of the Sword," a composition of immortal quality attributed by later generations to the genius of Wagner. Upon repair of Nothung, after a foster filial farewell beating to Mime, set out in search of employment. Studied music under direction of the Bird Conservatory, specially devoted to chirping in the upper branches, and became in time during his various tramps through the forest the most expert oboe



player of his time, getting his soft dreamy reed tones presumably from the reed birds. Gained renown as expert ventriloquist, projecting notes of an ordinary crumpled horn from the third L. U. E. of the forest stage as far out as the wind section of the orchestra with entire ease. Challenged the dragon Fafner to a fight to a finish, the latter to match his death dealing steam fittings against the sword Nothung, and won the decision before the end of the second round, receiving all the gate money, the Championship of the Ring and the famous Tarnhelm tile as his reward. In possession of wealth, he placed his foster father immediately out of the reach of want by a playful poke in the ribs with his sword, and set forth to see the world. Acquired proficiency in the bird language, becoming so expert that he could talk politics with any kind of a feathered biped from a quail on toast to a canary. Married Brunhilde, leading soprano of the Sleeping Beauty Opera Company, his aunt once or twice removed, and later contracted a second alliance, while under the influence of ether, with Guttrune. Died of this later operation, owing to careless handling of instruments by Hagen, son of Alberich, thereby saving himself a suit for breach of promise at the hands of Brunhilde. His remains were destroyed by fire at Hagenheim-on-the-Rhine, not far from Worms, proving a total loss, there being no insurance. Recreations, wood ranging, dragon trapping and vocal athletics. Address, Camp Götterdämmerung, Valhalla-in-the-Pines.

**THE BIRD**—Breed unknown, but thought by students of ornithological mythology to have been a mocking bird, owing to the extraordinary range of her talents. Gifted with a light soprano voice of pleasing quality. Conducted the well known "Gladseim Singin' Skule," with a Department devoted to bird languages. President of the musical alma mater of Siegfried, who was its only known graduate. Supposed to have been the original ancestress of Chanticleer, the Hen Pheasant and other talking broilers of the later drama. Possessed of certain

prophetic qualities, which enabled her to secure a reliable bird's-eye view of the future, the information derived from which she would sell for a song. Original heroine of the Song, "'Twas A Little Bird That Told Me." Rendered all her solo passages on and from the wings. Recreations, prophecy and hatching songbirds for operatic use. Address, The Whistling Cuckoo, Valhalla Aviary.

**THE NORNS**—Daughters of Erda, or Earth, by Wotan. Secondary members of the Valhalla Woman's Federation, and sisters of the Valkyries. Named, respectively, First Norn, a contralto in the Valhalla choir; Second Norn, a mezzo in the same organization; and Third Norn, light soprano. Professional spinsters by trade, chiefly engaged in weaving destinies for gods and mortals, some of the former of which were returned by the consumers as unsatisfactory, but were subsequently shown to be of first class workmanship. Conducted a fortune telling parlor and general information bureau in the Valhalla country, with branch offices in the Walsekills. Special dealers in advance information somewhat remarkable for its accuracy, their prophecies being guaranteed not to crock or fade, and fresh supplies served daily at door of customers without extra charge. Collaborators in the popular romance, "Wotan's Woe," a six-best-seller of the period, giving in detail the full account of how the hero lost his eye at the Fount of Wisdom, and subsequently after various flirtations landed in the arms of Nemesis. Managers of the Valhalla Rope Walk, where they wove the Golden Cord of Destiny, with which Wotan and his followers were finally lassoed by the Fates. Recreations, rope walking, forecasting and general norning. Address, Erda Home for Single Ladies, Station Twenty-three, Valhalla Subway.

**GUNTHER**—Village magnate of Worms. Acknowledged leader of the Gibichung party, now become the chief opposition to the continued administration of the G. O. P. under Wotan. Second base in the Gibich National League. Figure-

head of the Insurrectos, as well as the leader of the best Rhenish society. Host at a weekend party to Siegfried at his castle on the Rhine. Deeply in love with Brunhilde, but not being of fireproof construction, was afraid to call in person to pay his respects, the fair object of his affections residing on the summit of the Walkurenfels completely hemmed in by bonfires in charge of Loge. Prompted by Hagen, and assisted by his sister Gutrune, etherized Siegfried, and through him, the young warrior under the influence of the anesthetic having forgotten his own personal interest in the bride-elect, wooed Brunhilde by proxy. Was about to prepare for the formal public ceremony when Siegfried died of an operation on his back by Hagen, causing indefinite postponement. Attempted to secure Siegfried's Ring taken from Brunhilde by force as a souvenir of the young warrior's visit, but was caught in the act and assassinated by Hagen, who wanted the Ring for himself. Recreations, kid glove politics, weekend parties and matchmaking. Address, Wormshurst-by-the-Rhine.

HAGEN—First Base on the Götterdämmerung nine. Son of Alberich, and trustee of all his father's bad qualities, which he administered with faithful assiduity. Dark horse candidate for chief magistracy. Original ancestor of Guy Fawkes, Captain Kidd and other undesirable citizens, not to use a shorter and uglier term. Chief conspirator in the home of his half-brother Gunther, and local boss in control of the political machine of the Gibichungs. Confidential adviser of Gunther, gradually preparing a *coup d'état* in his own favor. Instigator of the latter's varied matrimonial policies, and at the climax of his fortunes saved him from further anxiety by a master stroke of assassination, by

means of which he became heir presumptive as well as apparent. Performed a high diving act into the Rhine for the rescue of the Ring when hurled back to the Rhine Maidens by Brunhilde, and ended his career, both personal and political, ten fathoms under water, owing to the timely action of Woglinde and Wellgunde, who pulled him under and filed him away in a water and fire proof safe deposit vault for future reference. Recreations, villainy as a fine art, ward politics and conspiring. Address, Rhenish Submarine Safety Deposit Company, general agents for the Banks of the Rhine.

GUTRUNE—Village belle of Worms. Sister to Gunther and, by force of circumstances over which she had no control, half-sister to Boss Hagen. A wronged soprano of charm, and a victim of the political aspirations of her brothers. Was named in the papers in the projected suit of Brunhilde vs. Siegfried for breach of promise, but was able to prove her innocence without trial. Secondary wife of Siegfried, and permitted to enjoy the title of his widow for a brief period. Prior to complications was the leader of the younger set of the Worms Country Club. Successful inventor of a recipe for love potions, which made her popular with visiting swains, and was said by those who had tasted both to be even better than those her mother used to make. On the death of Siegfried, Hagen and Gunther, was left entirely without visible means of support, going ultimately upon the stage, where she gained renown in the interpretation of minor Wagnerian roles. Recreations, putting up preserved love apples and chaperoning house parties. Address, Pink Potion Company, Pinkham-on-the-Rhine.



CRAWFORD—Did the collision put the taxicab out of business?

CRABSHAW—Yes; the only part that remained in good running order was the meter.

## GIPSY BLOOD

By Martha Haskell Clark

SOMETIME I shall go back to the highways, the byways,  
The whitely ribboned roadways through the hedgerows far unrolled,  
To the scent of rain wet heather,  
And the May white gipsy weather,  
And the vagabonding willows, with their plumes of dusty gold.

The faces here that pass me, with the glad eyes, the sad eyes—  
The eyes of all the world pass by, save those of gipsy brown,  
Those deeps of clear revealing,  
Of smiles and sly concealing,  
Like pools of moorland water on a bracken-bordered down.

Sometime I shall go back to the starlight, the far light,  
The flames of upland campfires in the pine dusk sharp unfurled,  
To the glad heart sunlit faring,  
And the dusk gray evening lairing,  
Beside the widespread Wander Trail that leads across the world.

Sometime I shall go back—in the May time, the stray time;  
They have bound my heart with hawthorn, and it blossoms with the spring;  
So some fern wet wander weather,  
Heart and stars and winds together,  
You will meet it, hawthorn-girdled, gone a sudden gipsying.



“HE has an iron will.”  
“Then it was forged by his wife.”



HE laughs best whose laugh lasts.



IF you try to pay others back in their own coin, you will soon find yourself passing counterfeits.

# THE PENULTIMATE TEST

By Leslie T. Peacocke

## CHARACTERS

LORD ORMSBY DEWHURST  
VERA DEWHURST (*his wife*)  
JOHN COBBS (*a bookmaker*)  
HESTER (*a maid*)

PLACE: *Lord Dewhurst's residence, London.*

TIME: *The present.*

**S**CENE—*A smoking room richly but rakishly furnished. Pictures of race horses and hunting scenes adorn the walls. On the center wall is a large painting of "The Saint," with which LORD ORMSBY hopes to win the Derby. In a corner at the left is a stand containing polo sticks, hunting crops and canes. Over this hangs a gun rack containing fowling pieces and rifles. A small table at the left holds a reading lamp, also a tray containing spirit, decanters and glasses. There is an easy chair on either side of this table, and a writing table at the right, on which is a telephone. The window at the right is open, and through it are heard the distant strains of a street organ. When the curtain rises LORD ORMSBY, in evening dress, and JOHN COBBS are found seated at the center table, smoking.*

COBBS (*firmly*)  
So that's how it stands, my lord.

ORMSBY  
I see. Well, I'll do my best, as I've told you before. But supposing—

COBBS (*vehemently*)  
There ain't any supposing about it, my lord. This time you've got to settle. If it hadn't been for me you'd have been posted last Monday. This is only Friday, and you've got till Monday to find the money; and for a man in your position three thousand pounds ought to be easy. If you don't, you'll be black-listed, sure as my name's John Cobbs.

ORMSBY (*petulantly*)  
But every bookmaker in London knows that I always pay up, even if I do keep them waiting sometimes. Why are they closing up on me like this all of a sudden?

COBBS  
Because there's been rumors, my lord. I don't want to hurt your feelings, but you know what I mean. Monday was settling day, and you didn't settle. You've been given till next Monday, and that's stretching a point, as you know. Now what I came to see you about is—

ORMSBY (*angrily*)  
Yes, I know. You want "The Saint," but you won't get him. (*He points to the*

*picture on the wall behind him.)* Why, the mere fact of my owning *him* and his chance of winning the Derby ought to be guarantee enough that I'm not broke, nor anywhere near it. And the Derby's only three weeks away.

COBBS

Yes, but if you ain't got money enough or can't get money enough to settle the bets you owe now, you won't be able to lay any on him to win, so the horse ain't any use to you. The proposition I have to make, my lord, is this: I'll give you six thousand pounds for him—subject to a "vet's" opinion, of course.

ORMSBY (*indignantly*)

Thank you; you're very kind. But you've made a shocking bad guess if you think I'm going to sell him. He's at ten to one now, but he'll be at even money on the day of the race, and he'll win. There's not another horse entered that can touch him.

COBBS

Oh, I don't know about that. There's that mare of Mr. Howard Savile's—"Sweet Barbara." She's the favorite now and I'll take a lot of beating, too.

ORMSBY (*contemptuously*)

Bah! No more chance than a rabbit against "The Saint."

COBBS

Well, I'll make it guineas, my lord. Six thousand guineas. (*He produces a chequebook.*) You'd better take it, 'cause you need the money, and—

ORMSBY (*springing from his chair*)

That'll do, thank you, Mr. Cobbs. (*He moves to the wall at the right and touches a bell.*) Your threats about posting me if I don't settle next Monday were all very well and quite to be expected, but I won't allow you to sit there and insult me.

(*HESTER enters.*)

COBBS (*laughing ironically*)

Ho, ho! That's very fine, my lord, getting on your high horse like that when—

ORMSBY (*quietly to HESTER*)

Show this gentleman to the door, please.

HESTER (*looking at COBBS and holding the door invitingly open*)

Yes, my lord.

COBBS (*rising awkwardly from his chair*)  
Eh?

ORMSBY (*coldly, pointing to the door*)

The servant is waiting to show you out.

COBBS

Ho, indeed! (*He picks up his hat and stick and stamps angrily to the door.* Put out, am I? Well, you settle next Monday or you'll be put out, too, my lord. (*In the doorway.*) But all the same, if you change your mind about selling "The Saint" before then, let me know. My offer stands good till Monday. Six thousand guineas.

ORMSBY (*enraged*)

Go to—go to thunder!

(*COBBS goes out with a short angry laugh, followed by HESTER, who closes the door. ORMSBY listens a moment to their receding footsteps, and then goes up to picture of "The Saint" and gazes at it with hands clenched.*)

No, I'll be hanged if I do!

(*He comes down to the table, takes a drink and sits dejectedly. The door opens and VERA enters. She wears an evening gown and shows evidence of mental depression and ennui.*)

VERA

Who was that awful man? He tramped down the stairs like a regiment of soldiers.

ORMSBY

Cobbs—a "bookie." He came to threaten me that I'm to be posted on Monday if I don't settle.

VERA

Oh, Ormsby! How dreadful! You mustn't let that happen.

ORMSBY

Of course not, if I can help it. But I don't quite see how I'm to avoid it. It's three thousand.



VERA (*sitting down*)

As much as that? Why, that's awful! That's more than you've ever owed before. You can't overdraw on the bank for that.

ORMSBY (*with a bitter laugh*)

No, not very well. I'm overdrawn now. *They're* pressing me, too.

VERA

Oh, dear! Well, I suppose you'll have to borrow it from somebody. You have lots of friends at the club, and they know you always pay your debts.

ORMSBY (*bitterly*)

Borrow it! I would if I could, but I owe every man I know. We've been living on borrowed money for the last two months.

VERA (*gazing at him pityingly, but somewhat contemptuously*)

As bad as all that? And you never told me, Ormsby. The few jewels I have wouldn't fetch much, I'm afraid, or I should offer them with pleasure. Have you tried the money lenders? I know their rates of interest are something frightful, but something must be done.

ORMSBY

Yes, I've been to every Shylock in the city; but I have no security to offer, except "The Saint," and they don't lend money on race horses.

VERA

And the Derby's only three weeks away. Why not appeal to your brother again? Tell him what a terrible thing your being "posted" means, and for the sake of the family he is bound to do something. A duke with the big estate that he has can't afford to let his brother be disgraced like that.

ORMSBY (*sourly*)

Bah! A lot Monty cares about that! His books and his Parliamentary business are all he cares a rap about. He thinks racing one of the cardinal sins, and if I come a cropper he'll think it a jolly good thing. He told me so.

VERA (*sighing*)

Oh, dear! It seems so awful one can never depend on relatives. Even though my own father's a bishop, I don't believe he'd help us if he could. And then I don't like to ask him; you know Tom's expenses in the army, and Maud and Iva and—

ORMSBY

Oh, I know it wouldn't do any good. This amount's too big for me to borrow from anyone. There's the keep of "The Saint," too, and all the stable expenses. It's such confounded bad luck. If I can only settle on Monday and scrape together a thousand or two to back him for the race now, when he's at ten to one, we'll be in clover and able to start with a clean sheet. There's nothing in the race that can touch him.

VERA

That's what Ridley says; and he has trained several Derby winners, hasn't he? Can't you get the bookmakers to trust you for another few weeks—just until after the race?

ORMSBY (*petulantly*)

No. They've stretched it a week as it is. Besides, that fellow Cobbs is after "The Saint." He offered me six thousand guineas for him.

VERA (*brightening*)

He did? Then why not sell him? Six thousand would clear off everything, wouldn't it?

ORMSBY (*astounded*)

What! Sell "The Saint"! You must be crazy, Vera. After racing all these years, and having the chance at last of winning the Derby!

VERA

Yes, but he mightn't win, after all. There's "Sweet Barbara." All the papers say *she* is sure to win.

ORMSBY (*peevishly*)

Bosh! What do the papers know about it? I know, and Ridley knows, and Howard Savile knows, too, that his horse hasn't a chance. No, by Jove, I'd rather shoot "The Saint" than sell him to a

bookmaker. (*He is gazing at his wife and suddenly gives a start as a brilliant idea strikes him. He gives a gasp of relief.*) By Jove!

VERA

What's the matter?

ORMSBY (*hesitatingly*)

Er—oh—er—I was just thinking of Savile. Have you seen him lately?

VERA (*giving him a quick, searching glance*)

Why, yes. Last night, at—er—at the Ffolliots'. I—er—I danced with him.

ORMSBY (*studying her face eagerly*)

Oh, you did? Have you seen much of him lately?

VERA (*assuming indifference*)

Oh, I meet him occasionally at—er—at different houses. At dances and concerts, and the theater sometimes. He goes out a good deal, you know. But why do you ask, Ormsby?

ORMSBY (*falteringly*)

I was wondering if—er—er if he wouldn't be able to help us.

VERA (*puzzled and amazed*)

Help us? How do you mean? Er—in what way? I don't understand.

ORMSBY (*striving to cover his embarrassment by mixing himself a drink*)

Well—er—if he knew the exact facts of the case, you know, he—er—might like to see me through. As one sportsman to another, you know.

VERA (*reproachfully*)

Oh, Ormsby! Why, you couldn't go and ask him to lend you money! You have never been very friendly with him.

ORMSBY

I know that, but we've always had more or less respect for each other. He's a good sportsman, and if it was explained to him how I am situated the chances are he'd lend us enough to tide us over. He's rolling in money, you know.

VERA (*over whose face has crept a look of obvious contempt*)

Yes, but I shouldn't think you'd like to ask him. You have never gone out of your way to be decently civil to him. You haven't exactly treated him as a friend of whom you could ask a favor.

ORMSBY

No, perhaps I haven't. He's not altogether my sort.

(*VERA ventures a swift glance at her husband and an inscrutable smile flits across her face.*)

I didn't exactly intend to ask him myself. I thought you might be able to work that for us.

VERA (*after a pause*)

What on earth do you mean, Ormsby? That I—that I should ask Howard Savile for money?

ORMSBY

Well, no, not exactly. You know what I mean. You won't be asking any extraordinary favor. Just a loan for a few weeks, so as to tide us over. He'll understand.

VERA (*averting her face*)

I—I don't think he will. I'm sure he would think it very strange. I couldn't do it, Ormsby.

ORMSBY (*petulantly*)

Why not? He can't very well refuse you if you tell him how urgent it is. He's as friendly as ever, isn't he?

VERA (*softly*)

Yes. He has never wavered in his friendship.

ORMSBY

Then there's no fear that he won't lend us what we want. It's only a few thousand.

VERA

I know. But it wouldn't matter if it were only a few shillings; I couldn't ask him, Ormsby.

ORMSBY (*annoyed*)

Oh, that's nonsense, Vera. There's nothing awkward about asking an old friend for a temporary loan. I'd ask

him myself if I were as friendly with him as you've always been.

VERA

Yes, I dare say you would. But you're a man, and a man can do a lot of things that a woman can't very well do. You surely must see what I mean.

ORMSBY (*losing patience*)

Oh, that's all very well, but circumstances sometimes alter cases. You've known Howard Savile for years, and he'd do anything you ask him, I believe. Besides, it's the only plan I can think of. Savile won't think it out of the way, your asking him.

VERA (*firmly*)

Well, I have no intention of doing so, so there's no good discussing the question. If you don't see it the way I do, I can't help it. (*She rises and moves as if to leave him.*)

ORMSBY (*rising also, and visibly angry*)

Look here, this is an awfully serious matter, and you've got to help me out if you can. I don't often ask a favor of you, Vera, and I wouldn't do so now, only I don't see any other way out of it.

VERA

Yes, but you have asked me to do the one thing I cannot do. I cannot ask Howard Savile for money.

ORMSBY (*exasperated*)

Only a loan. I'll pay him back after the Derby. I don't see any reason why you can't do it. It isn't as if you were in love with the man or—or anything like that.

VERA (*wheeling sharply, her cheeks flaming*)

Ormsby!

ORMSBY (*sarcastically*)

Oh, I know. I'm not such a fool as you think. You have always had some foolish sentimental ideas in your head about him. I have always known that.

VERA (*biting her lips and moving toward the door*)

If you have known that, I should think you'd hardly like to ask me to go to him for money to pay your debts.

ORMSBY (*intercepting her*)

Oh, I've never seriously thought that you were in love with him, of course. That's too ridiculous. But most every woman sticks some man on a pedestal and weaves ideals about him, and it's usually not her own husband. I don't suppose for a moment that you've ever woven any ideals about me.

VERA

I'm not silly, Ormsby. What other women may do does not influence me in the least. We'll drop the discussion, please.

ORMSBY (*angrily*)

No, we won't. We've gone too far. I suppose I've hit the right nail on the head and you do imagine you're in love with the fellow. That's the reason for all this fuss, eh?

VERA (*scornfully*)

If you were in your right senses you would not dream of saying things like that. What right have you to even imagine such a thing?

ORMSBY

Right? By Jove, you ought to know. You were practically engaged to the fellow when I met you first, and would have married him, I expect, if I hadn't cut him out. Not but that I'm jolly glad that I did.

VERA (*her face averted*)

Then you ought to see that I'm the very last person to ask him a favor like that.

ORMSBY (*impatiently*)

Rot! If you're not in love with the man, what does it matter? I don't suppose he's in love with you now; is he? Your marrying me must have pretty well cured him of that, you know.

VERA (*falteringly*)

Of—of course.

ORMSBY

Then it's all right. You can't seriously have any objection. The main point is, there isn't much time before Monday, so we've got to know at once whether he'll do it or not. (*Looking at his*

watch.) It's only half past eight now, and he'll probably be at dinner. What club does he usually go to for dinner?

VERA (*alarmed, regarding him with amazement*)

The Carlton. But what on earth are you proposing to do?

ORMSBY

Find out whether he's such a good friend as you think he is. By Jove, it's lucky we dined so early! (*He goes to the writing table and points to the telephone.*) You can call him up at the Carlton and see if you can't get him to come over to-night. You'll probably catch him if you do it at once.

VERA (*aghast*)

What! I—I call him up? Call him up and ask him to come here?

ORMSBY

Why, yes, of course. It's all right.

VERA

What! Do you mean now—this minute? To—to come here tonight?

ORMSBY (*impatiently*)

Yes. We can't afford to waste any time. Tell him you want to see him on some very urgent matter, and ask him to drop over from the club. You can change your dress if you like, but you look very nice as you are.

VERA (*amazed*)

Why, Ormsby! You can't realize what you are asking me to do. To invite him to come here, when you have never once invited him inside the house since we were married! He'll think it frightfully strange. If you really want him to come, you must ask him yourself.

ORMSBY (*fretfully*)

No, no, no, no. That wouldn't do at all. The chances are he wouldn't come. No, I mustn't appear in the matter. You'll have to make it a personal favor to yourself. That's the only way you'll ever get him to do it.

VERA (*her face strangely pale*)

And what do you propose to do? Sit and calmly listen to me imploring him

for the loan of three thousand pounds to pay your racing debts?

ORMSBY (*hastily*)

No, by Jove! I'm going out. I'll go to the club and stay there until he's likely to be gone. You can fix it all in an hour or so, you know.

VERA

And you are seriously asking me to do this, Ormsby? You are quite serious?

ORMSBY

Why, yes, it isn't such an extraordinary thing to ask you to do, when you know the hole we're in. He won't refuse.

VERA (*with cold deliberation*)

And you intend to go out and leave me to receive Howard Savile—~~here—alone—~~ in your house, and to beg him for money to pay your debts?

ORMSBY (*not understanding her point of view, and exasperated at the delay*)

Yes, that's what I mean; only you needn't make it appear as if I were asking you to commit a crime. (*He takes up the telephone.*) Here, call up the Carlton and see if he's there. He'll have just about finished dinner by now, and he may go out if you don't hurry.

(*VERA hesitates a moment, and then with face terribly set and determined, advances to the telephone and takes the receiver in her hand.*)

VERA

All right, Ormsby. I'll do exactly as you ask me, and I have no doubt that Howard Savile will lend me all the money I want. But if—

(*She breaks off, bites her lip viciously to check herself and jerks the receiver from its hook. ORMSBY has noticed the broken speech and her chilled attitude, and becomes vaguely uneasy.*)

ORMSBY (*quickly*)

But if, what? If what, Vera?

VERA (*disdainfully, her mouth at the telephone*)

Oh, nothing. (*Into the transmitter.*) Oh, are you there? Give me Gerrard 926. Yes, 926.

ORMSBY (*anxiously scanning her face and puzzled at its strange expression*)

What did you mean to say, Vera? Why are you looking like that?

(*She pays no heed, only obviously shrinking from him as he bends closer to her.*)

VERA

Oh, is that the Carlton Club? . . . Is Mr. Howard Savile there? . . . He is? Then will you call him to the telephone, please?

(*A vague fear has come over ORMSBY, and suddenly his rather dense mind realizes the probable outcome of the extraordinary request he has made of his wife. The enormity of the situation is brought home to him and he emits a gasp of dismay.*)

ORMSBY

Oh, Vera, stop!

VERA (*shrinking further from him, her eyes looking coldly into his, still speaking into the telephone*)

Hello! Oh, is—is that Mr.—

(*With a frantic clutch, ORMSBY snatches the instrument from her hands, and pushing her forcibly aside, speaks himself in as natural a voice as his perturbation will allow.*)

ORMSBY

Oh—er—is that Mr. Howard Savile? . . . Oh—er—how d'you do? This is Ormsby Dewhurst. . . . Yes, Lord Ormsby Dewhurst. . . . What? . . . No, no; Lady Ormsby's all right. We're both as fit as can be, thanks. How's "Sweet Barbara" coming along? . . . Good! Delighted to hear it. . . . What? "The Saint"? Oh, he's splendid—in splendid form. That's what I called you up about, Savile. It's rather a long story to tell you over the 'phone, but the fact is, I can't keep him. It's a private reason. I've got to sell him, that's all, and I've got to do it before Monday. . . . What? . . . No, I'm not joking. Never was more earnest in my life. I want to give you the first refusal of him. Will you take it? (*There is a pause. VERA stands some paces from her husband, her hands clenched tensely to her bosom and amazed bewilderment in her eyes.*) Yes, of course I know he's got a good chance,

and I'm going to back him to win with every penny I can scrape together. I'll let you have him for five thousand pounds. Cobbs, the bookie, offered me that and more, but I won't sell him to one of those scoundrels. He's worth five thousand. . . . What? . . . Oh, yes, of course that's the reason, or I wouldn't sell him. . . . What? . . . Oh that's awfully decent of you, Savile, but—er—I never borrow money—(*Laughing*) well—er—that is to say—er—never from a friend. Mightn't be able to pay it back, you know. . . . What? See me? Why, of course. Come and lunch with us tomorrow, and we can run down to Epsom afterward and you can see the horse, and if everything seems all right to you, we can close the transaction on the spot. You will? . . . Good! . . . What time? Oh—er—about twelve thirty; that'll give us a long afternoon. We can take Lady Ormsby along with us, and if you're not engaged tomorrow night we can celebrate the event at a theater and a supper at the Savoy. . . . (*Laughing.*) Yes, you can pay for the supper. . . . No, my dear fellow, I don't mind it a bit. I would, though, if I had to sell him to some fellow I didn't like. Next to myself I'd rather see you win the Derby than anyone I know. All right, then, we'll look for you at twelve thirty. . . . Yes, Lady Ormsby knows all about it. She'll be delighted, too. She was afraid I'd have to part with him to somebody who wasn't a friend. All right, Savile. Good night.

(*He hangs up the receiver, passes his hand hastily across his brow and gives a deep sigh of relief. VERA has been gazing at him, fascinated, her eyes growing every moment more warmly tender. She moves impulsively toward him and places her hand on his shoulder.*)

VERA (*softly*)

Ormsby. I—I—I—can't say what I feel. I—I—I—don't know how to—

ORMSBY (*brusquely, with an attempt at nonchalance*)

Oh, that's all right. Only sensible thing I could do. Ought to have thought of it before.

(*He rises and moves to the door.*)



VERA (*detaining him*)

Oh, yes, I know, dear, but you've done such a— Oh, I—I—don't know how to say it. Such a— such a wonderful thing, Ormsby. (*She clings to him, her eyes moist.*)

ORMSBY (*sheepishly*)

Oh, nonsense. Any other fellow would have done the same.

VERA (*vehemently*)

No, Ormsby—not the way you did it.

Oh, I'm so awfully glad, dear, and so sorry— oh, so sorry about "The Saint." You deserve to win the Derby, and—and I shall almost hate to see Howard Savile win it instead of you.

ORMSBY (*placing an arm around her*)

My dear little woman, you mustn't look at it like that. Remember, the poor fellow is entitled to some consolation. You know he—he failed to win you. (*Bending to her, he encircles her in his arms and kisses her as the curtain falls.*)



## A BREATH OF LIFE

By H. T. Grant

FORGET the pavements with their fetid breath  
 Hiding 'neath patchouli the taint of death.  
 Forget the smells of poverty and those  
 Of hothouse mansions, sensuous, stale and close.  
 Lift up your face to catch the higher air  
 That bears, if you can sense them, everywhere  
 Remembrances of everlasting worth,  
 The very essences of very earth,  
 The scent of thyme, the wood fire's acrid sting  
 Whose pungent welcome makes the traveler sing;  
 The joyous stench of turnips after rain,  
 The fragrance of a bean field kissed again  
 By wanton winds who, wandering faithlessly,  
 Traffic her kiss for spindrift with the sea;  
 Or, best of all (this is distilled by elves  
 And used for perfume by the gods themselves)  
 A whiff of that intoxicating brew  
 Of golden gorseblossoms drenched with moonlit dew,  
 Which calls back half-lost nights and drives out man  
 To hunt with Artemis or dance with Pan.



IT is perfectly safe to criticize the woman in the tight skirt—she can't kick.

# JEUX DU DESTIN

Par Alfred Athis

ON demandait un jour à Léonce Avrillon quelle avait été la plus forte émotion de sa vie de joueur.

Sans hésiter, ainsi qu'on aurait pu s'y attendre, entre mille souvenirs de parties sensationnelles, il répondit :

—C'était à Schenbaden, il y a un peu plus de dix ans. La saison, qui m'avait été particulièrement néfaste, touchait à sa fin. Le portefeuille garni de vingt-quatre billets de mille mark, seul vestige de ma splendeur estivale, je m'étais installé à la table de baccara vers quatre heures de l'après-midi. A deux heures du matin, j'y étais encore ; mais les vingt-quatre billets n'y étaient plus.

"J'ouvris ma bourse, elle contenait encore trois doubles-couronnes. Je résolus de les perdre d'un coup, pour en finir ; mais le sort narquois en décida autrement, et je mis près d'une heure à m'en débarrasser, après des alternatives de gain et de perte de la plus lamentable insignifiance.

"Il me restait exactement deux pièces de un mark. Je me levai sans bruit et je sortis, après avoir laissé au vestiaire la moitié de ma fortune.

"Nullement pressé de regagner ma chambre d'hôtel, en quête d'un sommeil problématique, je me dirigeai, d'un pas quelque peu vacillant, vers les jardins du Casino.

"Il faisait clair de lune. Protégée par l'écran dentelé des hautes cimes du Harz, la nuit pudique se baignait dans le lac avec toutes ses étoiles. . . . Jamais spectacle de la nature ne me laissa plus indifférent.

"Je ne m'étais pas encore trouvé dans une situation aussi critique. Ayant fait récemment appel à tous mes amis, puis à tous mes débiteurs, et même à tous mes

créanciers, je ne pouvais compter, pour l'instant, sur la moindre somme. Dès lors, comment acquitter ma note d'hôtel ?

"Et comment ne pas l'acquitter ?

"Comment rester à Schoenbaden ?

"Comment partir ?

"Il eût été bien vain d'espérer que l'on me délivrerait à la gare un billet, fût-il de troisième classe, à crédit. Or, le chemin de fer était le seul mode de rapatriement possible, attendu que j'étais un marcheur trop médiocre pour m'appuyer les mille kilomètres qui me séparaient de Paris, et que, d'autre part, ma limousine avait depuis plusieurs jours quitté le pays, avec son nouveau propriétaire, également acquéreur, au lendemain de ma précédente culotte, de mon chronomètre et de mes menus joyaux.

"Pour couper court à cet examen douloureux et sans issue, je me mis à repasser dans ma mémoire les phases de la partie, et à faire—selon une habitude invétérée, après la victoire comme après la défaite—la critique des opérations.

"Soudain, en fouillant machinalement dans mon gousset, j'y découvris, plié en in-32, un morceau de papier dont le seul contact me donna le frisson, et que j'eus tôt fait, à la clarté lunaire, de reconnaître pour un billet de cent mark.

"Non, je ne crois pas, dans toute ma carrière de joueur, avoir connu d'émotion comparable à celle que j'éprouvai alors.

"Instantanément, je sentis qu'avec ces providentiels cent mark j'allais rattraper sur l'heure mes pertes de la nuit, de la journée, de la saison. J'en étais sûr, je l'aurais juré. . . . Que dis-je ? Je l'aurais parié. C'était mieux qu'une certitude, c'était une révélation. Seul

un joueur exercé peut discerner ces avertissements du destin.

"Je m'élançai vers le Casino.

"La porte était fermée. Je fis observer à l'huissier qu'il y avait encore du monde et que la partie continuait. Il en tomba d'accord, mais m'objecta que, passé une heure du matin, l'accès des salles de jeu était formellement interdit.

"J'ignorais ce règlement, car jamais encore je n'étais arrivé au cercle aussi tard, n'en étant jamais sorti aussi tôt. J'insistai. L'huissier me répéta sa consigne. J'eus beau supplier cet homme, lui offrir de faire sa fortune en l'intéressant de moitié à mon bénéfice certain, il ne voulut rien entendre. Je dus faire demi-tour.

"Je compris que tout était perdu. Jamais le hasard ne me fournirait une pareille occasion de revanche, une minute aussi décisive de chance et de lucidité. Un secret instinct me disait que demain il serait trop tard.

"J'étais dans un tel état d'exaspération qu'il m'eût été impossible de rentrer chez moi. Je me remis à tournailler à travers le jardin, les yeux obstinément fixés sur les fenêtres toujours éclairées du cercle, et en froissant rageusement au fond de ma poche le billet qu'apparemment le destin ne m'avait fait retrouver que par une dérision suprême, lorsque j'aperçus, à la hauteur du premier étage, un vasistas entr'ouvert. L'ayant escaladé avec une agilité que je ne me connaissais pas, mais dont je ne pris même pas le temps de m'étonner, je me trouvai dans un petit réduit, ignoré de moi jusqu'à ce jour, et où trois employés du Casino s'efforçaient en vain de rappeler à la vie un vieux monsieur que, malgré la plaie sanglante de sa tempe droite, je reconnus pour un des plus éprouvés de mes compagnons d'infortune.

"Sans me laisser distraire par l'imprévu de cette scène qui, cinq minutes plus tôt, m'eût assez péniblement impressionné, j'adressai un petit sourire entendu aux employés stupéfaits de ma brusque irruption, et me précipitai vers le salon de baccara.

"La partie, où ni ma courte absence, ni la disparition, discrète encore que définitive, du vieux monsieur, n'avaient été remarquées, se poursuivait, calme et sévère, entre pontes de choix.

"En m'approchant de la table, j'eus, plus nette encore que tout à l'heure, la vision d'un gain rapide, continu, colossal; et, sans hésiter, je lançai mon billet sur le tableau de gauche.

"Il abattit neuf.

"Je laissai porter, tellement sûr de doubler à nouveau ma mise que je ne me penchai même pas pour regarder le point.

"Neuf, une seconde fois.

"Toujours avec la même tranquillité, je laissai les quatre cents mark.

"Je les perdis.

"Je rentrai directement à l'hôtel.

"Chose étrange, à peine croyable, j'éprouvais un immense soulagement. Le coup avait été si rude qu'il m'avait soudainement et à jamais guéri de ma passion du jeu. Je n'étais ni furieux, ni découragé. Non, je sentais simplement que le jeu ne m'intéressait plus. Voilà, c'était fini, j'étais délivré.

"Et, en effet, à partir de cette nuit fatale, je cessai complètement de jouer, et, ayant obtenu de mon hôtelier un crédit suffisant pour terminer ma cure, je me consacrai uniquement au soin de ma santé, aux conversations, aux promenades, jusqu'au jour où une rentrée imprévue me permit de retourner au cercle et de reprendre mon existence normale, avec ses chères vicissitudes."



ON ne fait pas d'omelette sans casser des œufs.

# GOING INTO THEATRICAL DETAILS

By George Jean Nathan

"WELL, Mistah Bones, what am yoh profession?"

"I'se a dramatic critic."

"Ah, and what am the duties of a dramatic critic?"

"Yah, yah, yah! Yoh mean to say yoh don't know what am the duties of a dramatic critic?"

"No, Mistah Bones, I don't. What am they?"

"They am foah in numbah: First, Kitty Gordon's back; second, Frankie Bailey's laigs; third, 'Gustus Thomas's brain, and fo'th—"

"Yes, Mistah Bones?"

"And fo'th and most impo'tant is nevah, nevah to omit ravin' about the 'details' in a Mistah Belasco production!"

"The company will now sing that celebrated critic ditty entitled:

"We Love One Little Detail in a Play of David B. More Than All the Dramas Staged by Frohman, Shubert, K. and E."

Although I am the possessor of several credentials that would seem to indicate that I am a dramatic critic—not the least of which are a pair of nose glasses, the deep-rooted belief that everyone else is always wrong and I am always right, and a dictatorial and sometimes flippant manner of writing, to say nothing of a proper disapproval of vaudeville, Ben Greet, the speaking voice of Ruth Maycliffe and William A. Brady's scenery—I frequently am assailed with horrible misgivings. True, I have never failed to make annual recording of the elegant caboose view of Miss Gordon's shoulder blades. Nor have I too often overlooked the opportunity to chide naughty Paul Potter, to crack jokes

about the Bijou Theater, to compare farcical hits to "Charley's Aunt," to deplore the libretti of Harry B. Smith, or to remark that it was too bad Grace George could not get a vehicle more worthy of her talents. Indeed, in further support of my claim, I may even say that I once, about four years ago, came very near underestimating the importance of Eugene Brieux. Inasmuch, however, as I gave some days of thought to the matter and did not underestimate Brieux when I came to review his play in point, it would seem that I have two black marks, at least, against me.

On the other hand, thousands of intelligent and well informed persons insist that I cannot be a real dramatic critic because I have never seen fit to paint a bright future for the Drama League of America, because I have never referred to him as "young" Mr. Edward Sheldon, because I never use the word "nuances," because I cannot die of laughter at the sight of Eddie Foy and because I have always maintained that a moderate quota of good looks is somewhat essential where an actress, however otherwise competent, seeks to delineate the role of a goddess whose face, according to the manuscript and the rest of the characters, has been kissed by Venus, whose brow is as the sunlit gardenia, whose eyes are as twin twinkling stars and whose lips are as soft and wet and crimson as petals of the rose in the silvered dew of early dawn. It has been urged against me further that I have detected merit in some of Percy MacKaye's work, that I have even observed intermittent demonstrations of talent in the efforts of Marie Doro, that I have an aversion to the Eva Davenport sort of

comedy, that I do not become indignant every time George Cohan's name is mentioned, that neither Laurence Irving nor Henry Miller ever called me names, that I sometimes openly admit there may be good in the unsuccessful endeavors of some of our playwright novices, that I never derive a quip out of the title of the play I am reviewing and that I do not look like Alan Dale.

That I have lost much of my aboriginal confidence in myself in the face of these contentions goes without saying. Indeed, not so long ago, when several persons proved to me that I could not *possibly* be a real dramatic critic inasmuch as I had remarked in print that Sarah Bernhardt at sixty-seven did not look quite so young as she had looked at seventeen, I decided at once that the only ways in which I could hold my job would be either to marry the daughter of my employer or to begin to wax enthusiastic over the plays of George Broadhurst. As my present employer has no daughter, and as rather than utilize the only alternative I would prefer to give up work and take to writing the kind of plays Louis Mann loves to buy, you may appreciate my position. And yet a lingering courage, a faint trust in my own capabilities, has remained in my soul. And some day, if my readers will only give me a chance, if they will only give me time, who knows but that I may still prove to them and to the world in general that I actually am a dyed-in-the-wool dramatic critic by going into typographical hysterics over the fact that in an act of a Belasco play a *real* buttonhook might be observed lying on a *real* boudoir dressing table!

No man writing of the theater of this generation has a keener respect for certain phases of the accomplishments of Mr. David Belasco than I. That I have been his appreciative friend and sincere juriconsult is best indicated by the persistence with which time and time again I have remained cool in the critical handling of his productions, when so many of his well meaning but misguided admirers were robbing him of the particular credit that was his due by rushing

amain into a completely digressive adjectival jag over such comparatively trivial mechanical and exotical tricks as "details," "lights" and what not. Not further back than the November issue of *THE SMART SET* did I set down the following:

David Belasco's staunchest admirers are really his worst enemies. They flock to each new dramatic production that he makes and sit through the presentation held by a play of variable quality made compelling by virtue of his deft artistry, by a corps of interpreters trained by him into remembering that each is being paid for acting rather than posing for some pretty girls in the lower left hand box, by a proscenium exhibit welded into a suave whole through his very positive sense of discrimination. And then when the final curtain falls they pile out into the lobby jabbering ecstatically over an insignificant table lamp in the second act that threw an equally insignificant (and wholly irrelevant) light against a window pane! They see the light, and they don't see the light.

While it is true that Mr. Belasco and I seem to be in discord in our interpretations of certain subjects in the scientific curriculum, while it is true that I have found it necessary to call him to task for having, in the foul vernacular, "slipped one over" on the public in the instance of "Peter Grimm," while I have consistently maintained that a producer of so firm and genuine a theatrical grasp and so deep a theatrical finesse need not conceal his talent from the public under a bushel of imagination-stifling "details," I have never flattered myself into the belief that Mr. Belasco does not know every bit as well as I the logical error of his ways. I cannot but believe that Mr. Belasco is tittering up his sleeve and giving the public what the public thinks it wants. I cannot but believe that this astute gentleman smiles to himself at the irreligion of inviting theatrical commentators to come back of the scenes and inspect the real Dutch Bible lying on the table, the real silverware in the cabinet, the real glass in the window in the hallway and the foreign but completely furnished off-stage room of little Willem at the top of the stairs. The pity of it all, however, is that from the viewpoint of stage producing—an art in which Mr. George Foster Platt alone approaches to him in this country—Mr. Belasco has



been so far above the need for such devices and stratagems and yet has resorted to them.

It comes, therefore, as something of genuine gratification to me to be able to report that this artist of theatrical production is at last beginning to find himself—and to his greater glory! "What!" you exclaim. "Has Belasco Reinhardtized himself? Has he read and concurred in the opinions of Gordon Craig? Has he been visited by the astral body of Beer-bohm Tree?" Hardly. But he *has* begun to demonstrate that he believes the play to be the thing above the "details." And be that play what it may, here is news that is good news. There is, as we shall presently see, but one sadness therein. The play under discussion, lately presented in the thitherward cities and not destined for metropolitan sight until next season, is "THE CASE OF BECKY," written by Edward Locke, whose name appeared under "The Climax," and having Miss Frances Starr for its sidereal player. In the main, what we discover here is an exhibit staged carefully and completely, in the physical sense, and almost wholly devoid of the circumambient devices and properties with which Mr. Belasco has hitherto directed the audience's attention away from the play itself. Of course there are still to be found traces of the artifices that have been relied on in former days to get a hinterland "Ah!" or an "Oh!" out of the spectators, such, for example, as the throwing on and immediate turning off of the electric current of a useless chandelier for no other purpose whatever than to impress the audience with the "detail" of the thing. And some ado is made of *real* books on science in a bookcase and a *real* paper drinking cup machine near a water spigot. But for ten of such sorghum shifts in an antecedent production there is only one in this. So far, so good. It is as if Mr. Belasco had walked right up and kissed Mr. George Arliss fondly on both cheeks for having not so long ago intruded these highly sensible remarks upon the press:

To my mind the idea of a manager spending huge sums on extravagant properties and lights

... is deplorable, to say nothing of being wasteful. If he gets good actors they will produce far more illusion of reality than all the scenery in the world. During the last few years the idea seems to have been growing stronger that theater audiences have no imagination. Really, it is largely a desire to stimulate his imagination that takes a man into the theater. And if he can watch and listen to good acting, he will not care a rap whether the chairs on the stage are real antiques or the rugs and the pictures genuine!

Comes now the fly in the ointment, the ghost at the feast, the fly in the raisin cake, the ghost at the widow's second marriage; comes now the pimple on Cleopatra's visage, the run in the silk stockings of a princess reclining in a chair of silver birch strewn with apple blossoms, the cinder at the Flatiron corner; comes now the ice in the claret, the claret in the friendly boxing bout, the friendliness in the boxing bout. Comes the flaw, the defect, the touch of melancholy. For it may be held by some of us that Mr. Belasco has elected the wrong moment, the inopportune spot, wherein to make pace toward a greater simplicity in the corporeal facts of play production. "Apostasy, paradox, contradiction, treason, transversal!" you cry in my ears. "Is not simplicity what we want willy-nilly, every place, everywhere?" you grin ironically in my eyes. And it would seem that you abash me and cause me to lodge my tail between my legs and slink shamefacedly from your august presence. And yet—Concerning "THE CASE OF BECKY," it is to be repeated that the eradication of much of the old unnecessary file of minor "details"—the real chamois penwiper on the real mahogany desk on the real Shiraz or Bokhara rug, the real spittoon on the real rubber pad—is to Mr. Belasco's everlasting credit, a tribute to his increasing and strengthening discernment. With this fact few will quarrel.

The quarrel rests rather in another direction—in the direction of general treatment. And when you see the presentation, I cannot doubt that you will concur with me in the opinion that if ever a Belasco play for complete effectiveness demanded the old Belasco treatment, the overelaboration yet stunning smite of a "Peter Grimm," that

play is the one with which we are here busied. The readiest answer to this statement will concern itself with the suggestion that the more simply an intricate scientific subject is handled the more easily will it attain its goal of interest, appeal and understanding in the persons for whom it is being exploited. In the classroom, in the laboratory, certainly. In the theater, NO. And this especially when the scientific matter in hand is based on premises as involved as a Philadelphian's conception of Socialism (Socialism is merely good old-fashioned Republicanism without the graft), as extravagant as the American estimate of Arnold Bennett and as hypothetical—however fairly so—as the assumption that the New York idea of observing the Sabbath consists of anything more than closing up the corner saloon, having its boots polished, paying a nickel instead of a cent for its newspaper, letting the cook off for the day and carrying a cane.

Harken to the intrinsic matter of the play, the action of which transpires "in the 'home' of Dr. Emerson, Meadowville, New York." Under the doctor's care and observation is a girl obsessed with two personalities. Emerson, a man high in the world of scientific research, a master of all the psychs and psychos from pathics to ology, therapy to physics, iatry to dynamics, genesis to neurosis, physiology to metry and statics to osophy, centers his energies toward the accomplishment of a final abrogation of what Lewes calls the evil "attitude of the ego" in the girl's dual self, and a triumph of the good. This bad self is known to the doctor as Becky; the good by the girl's own name, Dorothy. Dorothy's former life is veiled in darkness. Who she is, whence she has come, is unknown. Her case, in Emerson's words, "is one of the strangest of which I have ever heard—like another Jekyll and Hyde." Emerson seems to be making some headway with the girl when there arrives on the scene a professional hypnotist, a Professor Balzamo. Balzamo asserts that Dorothy is his daughter, demonstrates that he holds her *umfang des bewusslseins* completely

within the area of his own and demands that Emerson release her into his keeping. Emerson insists upon the proofs of the girl's parentage, and is shown the records by Balzamo. Emerson is suspicious. What to do? His one duty, he believes, is to attempt to cure the girl first. Time is short. By a subterfuge, he gets Balzamo into his laboratory, succeeds in hypnotizing him against his will (?), learns from him that it was Balzamo who stole his wife in the years of long ago, that Dorothy is his own child, that she was born while her mother was under the fastened cloak of Balzamo's hypnotic power and that she had been used as his subject after her mother's death. Emerson effects a cure and kills Balzamo's influence over the girl. Further than this rather fragmentary and not wholly fair narrative of the dramatic incidents, space forbids me to go.

What I wish to bring out in the rough citation of the ingredients of the play is the queer caliber of the play and the impossibility of projecting its spell in full across the footlights if treated, as it is, in this comparatively simpler and newer Belasco method. The last act, laid in the doctor's laboratory, is satisfactory in every way; but the two previous acts, while successful in stimulating a certain vague sense of the curious in one, leave one less impressed than might easily be the case. I do not mean to urge an artificial weirdness of green lights and St. Vitus music; what I urge is rather an impression less of an animated textbook and more of the wild, exotic, witchy blood of haunting life, of quixotic Peter Grimmness. Although the play is well grounded on professorial researches, its supreme exorbitance of premise militates against a hard-headed consideration of it from any other than a dramatic point of view. From this point of view, it must be accorded the virtue of interest. Whatever its shortcomings, it will keep you in your seat. From the point of view of practical science, "dual personality," while occupying the attention of psychologists since Sir Henry Holland first investigated the brain as a double organ and Wigan went him

one better with the complacent assurance that each of us has *two* brains, has always been regarded as approaching to a considerable hoax, as being merely an intermittent *mania hallucinatoria* of the plainest order, by the calmer psychopathists of reputation who have gone into the subject and by practically all non-neurasthenic medical scholars. Nothing daunted, however, there are some valiant champions of the "dual personality" theory who will point with bursting pride to Esquirol's citation of a case of *triple* personality, developed by a priest—so chronicles Ribot—through excessive mental application to the theological mystery of the Trinity; and who, after a somersault of hilarious glee, will refer you to a record set down by Professor Janet in the *Revue Philosophique*, March, 1888, of nothing less enjoyable than a case of *quadruple* personality. Mr. Locke's reference to the case of the girl in his play being like that of "Jekyll and Hyde"—sheer fiction—is to be censured as greatly as is the use of the words of Faust: "Not only two but several souls dwell within us," in those works of science in which it has been inserted by direct way of chatter yet by indirect or side street way of proof.

The company offering the play is in the main up to the Belasco standard of excellence. May I suggest to Miss Starr that, when in the character of the illiterate, thick-mouthed Becky, she desist from pronouncing the word "blue"—"blyou," and the word "conscientious" in any other way than Becky, to be consistent, must have pronounced it, to wit, "conshienshus"?

"A critic is a man who expects miracles," defines James Huneker, himself a critic and a most able one. "So," he continues, "it has become the general practice to ignore a poet in his totality and seek only for isolated traits. And then the trouble we take to search for what a man is not: the lack of humor in Shelley, the lack of spirituality in Byron, the lack of sanity in Nietzsche, the lack of melody in Richard Strauss!" With which Mr. Huneker brings himself to the tempting case of J. A. Strindberg.

With "THE FATHER," the first of the

latter's full length dramas to be acted in this country, the majority of the native theatergoing mob will become acquainted initially with the fact that such a man as Strindberg exists, just as it took a special matinee at the old Hackett Theater several years ago to make the American playhouse public first hear of Brieux and a special matinee performance at the old Princess to call the local attention to the fact that there was a man writing plays in England whose name was Shaw. The members of the native theatrical commonalty are never aware of the existence of any dramatist of power east of Battery Park until some philanthropic soul hires a theater for an afternoon and proves it to them. "You can't never tell about a play by reading it in a book," they say—and so, wisely, they give heed to no playwright who has not first passed the favor of the head playreader for Werba and Luescher.

In quoting the remarks of Mr. Huneker, I have indulged myself (if you will permit me to give you the diagram) in a sly piece of satirical jest, for had it not been for that apt gentleman's essay on Strindberg in "Iconoclasts—A Book of Dramatists," God only knows how the New York population would have been able to make up its mind on the dramatist's status without taking a couple of months off to study up and think it all over. On Page 145 of the essay named, there is to be discovered this sentence: "... makes 'Ghosts' an entertainment for urchins." Ask nine New Yorkers out of every ten who have just been introduced to "THE FATHER" at the little out-of-the-way Berkeley what they think of the play, and I guarantee you each mother's son of the nine will gropingly reach toward Mr. Huneker and appropriate the analogy for his own use. Mr. Huneker's words: "Strindberg is a good hater, and good haters are rare and stimulating spectacles" (Page 156), have also been working overtime since "THE FATHER" was revealed, as has his sentence (same page): "This sex-against-sex manifesto will not make him popular in America, a land peopled with gynolatrists." In

short, it may be ventured with a pertness deplorable in view of the earnest grain of the present subject, that the introductory disclosure of Strindberg to America has done more for Mr. Hunecker and Mr. Hunecker's book sales than Mr. Hunecker and Mr. Hunecker's book sales ever did for Mr. Hunecker.

Strindberg, as my readers know, is a curious admixture and psychiatric synthesis of Nietzsche, Shaw, Ibsen, Balzac, Brieux, Renan, Rousseau, Hauptmann, Gorky, Tolstoy, Poe and Harry Thaw. He is a supernormal alienist utilizing himself as his subject, a neurasthenic genius with a pen of moral aconite, a sorehead, a romantic business man, a practical poet of the deadly prosaic, a leper in the ballroom who lays hands on the whitest pair of shoulders, a dramatist of the shudder that to him is but a hollow and awful giggle, a vice-president of the board of directors of Hell, a madman who cuts the elevator cable, a cocktail made entirely of bitters, a trusting clodpate and a suspicious sage, a sourball, a reporter of hangover *psychopathia sexualis*, a master of words, a cannonader of the moor buzzards called women, a martyr in his own eyes, a mistaker of the teapot for the open sea, an atheist with a four days' growth leering from his window at passing school children, a safety razor with the safety attachment broken, a man who expectorates on the counterpane of the bed-chamber, a calm, cool statistician, a sex anarchist, a dramatist for vast wonder. His play, "THE FATHER," as my readers also undoubtedly know, concerns the doubt that theoretically must always exist in a man's mind as to whether he is or is not the parent of his own child and the manner in which a harpy, by burying this suspicion into the brain of her husband, eventually accomplishes her purpose in driving the man out of his head. For any of my readers who are of the intensely "lay" variety, and who may care to go no deeper into Strindberg than to speculate as to how he came into his attitude toward life and things in general, I may explain that he found himself absolutely destitute of funds very early in life, was compelled to

work as a "super" in a theater, was subsequently forced to enter journalism and was married three times. Any of these "lay" readers who know anything at all about journalism as a profession will now understand.

The trouble with Mr. Charles Rann Kennedy is that he has come to mistake theatrical trickery for thought. He causes a fifty-minutes-long play to be enacted on a completely darkened stage before an audience in a completely darkened auditorium, and then, when the play is ended, he sits back figuratively and smiles a broad smile of satisfaction for having succeeded in "impressing" that audience. But he never appears to stop to think that it was not his play that impressed his audience nearly so much as the fact that he had compelled the persons in it to sit for nearly an hour in weird and shivery surroundings. "Impressed," certainly, but the same sort of impression that will always be registered on one who goes down into a mine for the first time, who attends a spiritualist's seance for the first time or who for the first time sits in an oculist's waiting room with eyes temporarily deadened by belladonna when the only other individual in the room has previously been observed to resemble nothing quite so much as a pickpocket. After the curtain falls on Mr. Kennedy's play—"THE TERRIBLE MEEK," it is called—and the lights are suddenly switched on, he again mistakes the queer look in the eyes of the audience for something *he* has accomplished, when plainly enough it is merely a natural, and very uncomfortable, reaction of the retina. To sit through such a play of Mr. Kennedy's is much like having the measles. Considerable typographical ado has been raised over the placing of the story of the Crucifixion of Christ on the stage. Mr. Kennedy's offense in this regard lies not so much in his having utilized the tragedy of Golgotha for dramatic purposes—this might even be accomplished with rare beauty, with a spreading of inspiration and for a purpose of haling back the wayward hearts of these sunset days to within earshot of the message of His charity and for-

givenness and peace—but it lies rather in his having usurped something held close and sacred for the sheer purpose of achieving a sensational and theatrical atmosphere in which to mouth a mopish and highly phrased set of patent platitudes on "duty."

"Mistah Bones, yoh am something of a scholar, Ah take it?"

"Oh, yas, I'se a scholar, right enough."

"Well, then, Mistah Bones, what am a hero?"

"A hero? Why, a hero am the man in the last act who says he loves the heroine all the moh because she committed adult'ry with some otha fella in the second act!"

"The company will now render that charming little syncopated ballad entitled:

"Heroes Make Us Awful Sick but They Make the Happy Ending And Make the Playwrights the Royalties They Otherwise Wouldn't Be Spending."

See most recently, "THE RIGHT TO BE HAPPY" (you've managed already to get the plot from the title?) by H. Kellett Chambers. Here again we are asked to attend the West Twenty-eighth Street amours of a perfectly clear-headed but most temperamentally inclined lady of aristocratic Stuyvesant Square, and here again are we asked to shed tears because she monavanned to save her dear little brother from jail and because she liked the man anyway—at the time. Ah, were it not for that phrase "at the time," were it not for its short duration, what would we ever do for second and third acts! For no sooner has the dirty work been done than always up shows the clean, fine, high-minded young Augustus Blink—"the one decent man that's ever come into my life"—and all is changed. "Oh, Gawd, if I had only known—if I had only know ere it was too late!" But Gus is always there in the third act with the "That's all right, little woman; say no more about it; I understand!" and so all is well. By the modern heavenly and inseparable twins, Bacchus and Pluto, I am no saint, no anchorite, no moralist, no goody-goody! But such expostions of

sentimentally immoral "advanced sex ideas"—or whatever they are called—instil in me a delicious and all-consuming sensation of ennui. I may concretely sum up the entire play for you by quoting a few speeches selected at random from the manuscript:

#### ACT II

MOREHOUSE—Oh, you thought you had found an angel of purity, did you? Well, I'll open your eyes. She's been mine for the last six months—my girl, do you hear? Oh, it's no good glaring at me. Look at her if you want the answer. Look at her—she can't deny it. (JANET stifens herself with an immense effort of pride and defiance.)

JANET—Deny? Oh, is it necessary for me to deny that?

FORRESTER—No!

#### ACT III

JANET—Everything he said that night was true.

FORRESTER (nodding his head)—I knew it, dear.

JANET—You knew it?

FORRESTER—Yes. But we'll forget all about it. We will fold it away as if it had been an unfortunate marriage. I love you. Be my wife.

One of the prettiest hallucinations that we regularly encounter is to the effect that every girl in the chorus of a Ziegfeld show is so ravishing that it is all one can do to restrain himself from jumping out of his seat the moment the curtain goes up, clambering right over the footlights and marrying at least one of them on the spot. We have been duly impressed with the idea that when a Ziegfeld show visits New Haven, Pittsburg or some other town where the men are still overly emotional and impetuous, the magazine sales double just on account of the Tiffany ad. The advent of a Ziegfeld show, we have been apprised time and time again, is the occasion for the breaking up of countless homes, thousands of suicides on the part of unhappy men whose love has not been returned, the falling ill of Maxine Elliott out of sheer jealousy and the turning over of Madame Recamier in her grave, the temporary shutting down of all the mills and factories and the total suspension of all business activity. As a consequence, when a calm soul attends



a Ziegfeld entertainment and finds to his astonishment that his heart does not seem to be cracking his shirt front, that his pulse does not seem to be playing "Rum-Tum-Tiddle," and that he does not feeling like dashing out of the theater at once and cancelling the lease on his bachelor apartment, he is a bit disappointed. If he is a young man, that is. If he is an old man, he probably is a wee bit worried. "A WINSOME WIDOW," the latest Ziegfeld entertainment, still finds me supporting only one person. Having as its foundation Hoyt's youth recalling farce, "A Trip to Chinatown," we lay eyes here on an apotheosis of the silken limb, the shoulder swing, Julian Mitchellized motion and Emmy Wehlenized emotion. Disclosing a really authentic eye to color, one of the most beautiful scenes ever disclosed on the music show stage—a moonlit ice rink hung with orange lanterns and flashing the steel glint of a score of skaters clad in pale blue, with a white-coated band blaring out a melody that rhymes with the sauntering sway of the gliding bodies—and Harry Connor in his old role of Welland Strong, the evening gets the password even if the chorus contains no Gabrielle Rays, the score no Gabrielle Glides and the frequent side attempts at humor no Gabriel's trumpet.

Whenever you make bold to say you do not care for the circus any longer, some proficient ass arises to assure you that the reason for it is that you are getting old. It never seems to occur to the person that it is the circus that is getting old. For sameness, triteness, lack of novelty and of originality, I can draw no closer, no more apt parallelism than the circus of today and all book publishers' advertisements of all newly promulgated detective stories. Neither seems ever to vary. The circus with its same old clowns, its same old bareback riders, its same old chariot races, its same old acrobats and its same old smell you can recall with one eye and one nostril. The book advertisements—of which the following is an actual and typical example—you can recall without the nostril:

"The Mystery of the Boule Cabinet" is not a French detective story, inasmuch as the scene is laid right in the heart of New York City; but it is worthy of the best French masters of detective fiction in its audacity of plot, in the logical and at the same time baffling manner in which the clues are unwound, in its astonishing turns and twists, its astounding dénouement, and above all in its wonderful central figure, who is one of the few really great characters in detective fiction.

The recent exhibition of the Barnum and Bailey performers in Madison Square Garden offered as its leading "novelty" a spectacular symphony of the species made famous by Imre Kiralfy in the days when we were still living off father—pretty enough in its ingenuous way, but as archaic as batwing ties, Edward E. Rose's plays and persons who fall for the authenticity of such anonymous pseudo-biographical literary sideshows as "To M. L. G." So far as I could make out without the aid of the printed diagnosis, the spectacle had to do with a circus parade that went to a beautiful set of scenery representing a palace where its leader, a bareback rider with a helmet, became violently enamoured of a lady in white tights and green spangles. Following the loud blowing of many trumpets, the bareback rider with the helmet and the lady in white tights and green spangles sat down and watched some dancing. In the midst of the dancing another parade arrived, and the bareback rider grabbed a sword and made off amid wild alarums, returning presently in a dizzy condition. The lady in white tights and green spangles rushed to the bareback rider's side just as he fell to the floor dead. Then she seized a snake out of a basket, held it near her chest and fell on top of the dead bareback rider. You may imagine my amazement when I bought a program and discovered that what I had been witnessing was the tale of Antony and Cleopatra. "THE WALL STREET GIRL" reintroduces Miss Blanche Ring, whose throat is the home of the popular song, and who is one of the few actresses left in the native music show who can hold our attention without having to change costumes every ten minutes.

# THE TERRIBLE SWEDE

By H. L. Mencken

**R**UN your eye down the stenographic autobiography of Johan August Strindberg, the great Swedish dramatist, in "Wer Ist's," the German "Who's Who," and you will encounter this:

Verh: I, 76, m.d. Schauspiel. Siri v. Essen gesch. Wrangel, gesch; II, 93, m.d. Schriftst. Frida Uhl aus Wien, gesch.; III, 01, m.d. Schauspiel. Harriet Bosse aus Stockholm, gesch.

Which, being clawed into the vulgate, gives news that Strindberg married Siri von Essen, an actress and the divorced wife of one Herr Wangel, in 1876; that he divorced Siri and married Frida Uhl, a lady author "out of Vienna," in 1893; that he divorced Frida and married Harriet Bosse, of the Stockholm theaters, in 1901; and that he has since divorced Harriet. And which, being revolved a bit in mind, and weighed, as it were, in the psychological scales, points to the origin, perhaps, of the two most salient characteristics of the man, as dramatist and as novelist; the one being his strong tendency to empty his personal experience, without effort at disguise, into his every fable, and the other being his liking for depicting the conjugal relation as a form of combat—not as a combat genial and romantic, of pretty love taps all compact, but as a combat savage and to the death, like that between two bull walruses or a pair of half-starved hyenas. Strindberg, indeed, has lived more stories than even Strindberg could invent, and they have been stories to bulge the eyeball and lift the lanugo on the baldest head.

The son of a Stockholm barmaid, he has tasted almost every sort of adversity known to man. He failed, in his youth,

as teacher, as physician, as actor and as journalist. Coming into the world to the wagging of tongues (for his father, a small shopkeeper, did not marry his mother until a few months before his birth) he moved, until well into middle age, in a fetid atmosphere of scandal. At twenty-six he was hero and villain of a peculiarly nasty divorce case; at thirty-five he faced a term in prison for a gross offense against Swedish prudery. And then came another divorce case, and then another, and then yet another. And in the intervals he more than once went hungry and half-clad, and more than once fled his country to escape his woes, and more than once meditated suicide as the one escape from despair. No wonder his own life bulks so large in his books and plays! And no wonder the dominant tone of those books and plays is a cynicism so appalling that it turns the virtuous liver to water!

Compared to Strindberg, old Ibsen seems an optimist, almost a sentimentalist. "Ghosts," to be sure, gave us a shock in the naïve nineties, but that shock, as we all know, has since dissolved into a platitude. It would probably be difficult today to find a defender, not clerical or insane, for Mrs. Alving's disastrous fidelity to *mensa et thoro*. Even the flight of Nora Helmer, once so vile an infamy, is now admitted to have been excusable, if not actually ladylike. But who, so long as romance reigns and the family endures, will admit the essential truth, or even the ordinary sanity, of "The Dance of Death," or "Motherlove," or "The Bond," or "Lady Julie," or "The Father"? Here, indeed, is bitter, bitter stuff! Here is idol smashing with cobblestones! Here

is the massacre of the gods! In the first play, husband and wife wallow in a morass of mutual hatred, wounding and besmirching each other at every roll; in the second a debauched mother, sniveling sentimentally, drags her young daughter down; in the third husband and wife tear their child to pieces between them; in the fourth a sort of extralascivious Hedda Gabler seduces her father's valet, and in the fifth a nagging wife drives her husband crazy. Certainly not plays for sucklings. Certainly not plays that make the slightest concession to the common assumptions and traditions of the theater. And yet, when all is said and done, plays of truly astounding mordancy, with living people in them and the rank smell of reality.

Not all of Strindberg's work, of course, is in that key. On the contrary, he has also tried his hand at the historical drama and even at the poetical drama, and of the four plays lately translated by Edwin Björkman—"PLAYS," by August Strindberg (*Scribner*)—the first is of the last named species. But it is scarcely as a recreator of Swedish history and legend, whatever his talent in that field, nor as a heavy-handed imitator of Maeterlinck and the more romantic of the two Hauptmanns that he holds the attention of Europe today, but as a metaphysical realist who has carried the search for motives and causes to its uttermost limit. Not that he is a mere merchant of indecencies, a flabbergaster of the stalls. Far from it, indeed. It is always the psychological fact that interests him, and not the physical fact. What he tries to do is to find the genuine motive beneath the shells and trappings of conventional habit and morality. That husband and wife greet each other daily with certain words, that they engage in certain mummeries before their children and the world, that they occasionally quarrel over this or that, that their union ends thus or so—all this is to Strindberg only the surface play of life. What he seeks to get at is what they actually *think* of each other deep down in their secret souls—what ideas and impulses lie at the bottom of their outward acts—what change and color

of character each has derived from the other. Naturally enough, this quest involves the delineation of conflict, for it is only in the heat of conflict, when the primal emotions burst their bonds and the ceremony of civilization is forgotten, that self-revelation is ever genuine. And so, in his plays, one constantly encounters scenes like that famous one in the last act of "A Doll's House," wherein Nora and Torvald Helmer face each other across the table, or that less famous but even more staggering one in "Friedensfest," Hauptmann's "family catastrophe," wherein the skeletons of the Scholtz family come out to dance.

But whereas Hauptmann is a frank meliorist, with peace arising phoenix-like from his fires of combat, and even Ibsen, as a rule, hints humanely at a possible way out, Strindberg is ever impatient of compromises and happy endings. Seeing woman as a vampire, as the Nietzschean corruptor of the superman, as a parasite at war with masculine cleanliness and strength, he is unwilling to let her undergo any romantic metamorphosis, even for the sake of an affecting curtain. Not that he denies her a certain eleventh hour remorse, a temperamental incapacity for playing out her role to the bitter end, a tendency to be horrified, soon or late, by her own deviltry. That weakness, indeed, he actually insists upon, but only to show its unauthenticity and its moral futility. Thekla, in the last scene of "The Creditor," appalled by her ruin of two men, babbles for a chance to make atonement; Lady Julie, caught in her own net, begs Jean to assure her that she shall enter into grace; Laura, in "The Father," like Alice, in "The Dance of Death," mouths pious platitudes. But always to no purpose. The way of escape is ever closed. Responsibility is ever brought home. "Out with you, infernal woman!" shrieks Laura's victim. "And damnation on your sex!" "Atonement?" demands Thekla's. "One must atone by restitution—and you can't. You have not only taken, but you have destroyed what you have taken!" And the victim of Alice spits in her face, while Lady Julie's, her master at the end, puts the

cold steel into her hand and—"There is no other way. Go!" Even in "The Bond," though an armistice hangs vaguely in the air, if only because both antagonists are beaten, there is no escape for the woman. She talks sentimentally of peace at last, of sleeping near her child. "You hope to sleep to-night?" jeers her husband. "You?"

Mr. Björkman's volume of translations is made up of the two parts of "The Dance of Death," "The Link" (otherwise, "The Bond") and "The Dream Play," a reasonably representative selection, though it does not include Strindberg's most celebrated plays. The English dialogue is fluent and idiomatic, and, so far as I have been able to judge by comparison with the admittedly excellent German translations, very close to the original. A well written introduction and a complete bibliography add to the value of the volume. Simultaneously comes a new translation of "*Fröken Julie*," by Charles Recht (*Brown*), a considerable improvement upon the version made by Arthur Swan a year or so ago. (With the title of this play, by the way, all the translators, English and German, seem to have difficulties. Mr. Recht makes it "Countess Julia;" Mr. Swan prefers simple "Julie;" one of the Germans chooses "Gräfin Julie," and another "Fräulein Julie." In the original it is "Fröken Julie." "Fröken" means either "miss" or "lady." Inasmuch as Julie is a count's daughter, why not "Lady Julie"?) Beside this play and those in Mr. Björkman's volume, there are also English translations of "The Father," by N. Erichsen (*Lucy*); "Motherlove," "The Creditor" and "Swanwhite," by Francis J. Ziegler (*Brown*), and "The Stronger," "Simoon," "Debit and Credit" and "The Outcast" (*Badger*). Most of these are one-acters, and few of the translations are perfectly satisfactory. A well equipped Swede of my acquaintance, in collaboration with his American wife, is now engaged upon English versions of all of Strindberg's principal plays, and their publication in the United States has been arranged. Meanwhile we must rest content with what we have.

Comes now Percy Mackaye, of our own fair land, with two new books for the dramatic shelf. The first contains a prose drama called "TOMORROW" (*Stokes*), and the second is a volume of one-acters called "YANKEE FANTASIES," five in all (*Duffield*). Mr. Mackaye, who has yet to see forty, and probably has his best work still ahead of him, first attracted public attention and favorable notice as a composer of poetical plays in the grand manner, and in that field he still holds a place of considerable distinction. If you don't know his "The Canterbury Pilgrims," I advise you to get it and read it at once, for it is one of the best blank verse comedies done in English in many a long year. And in his "Jeanne d'Arc" and "Sappho and Phaon" you will find more melodious and excellent stuff, as you will also in "A Garland to Sylvia." Thus browsing the meadows of pentameter, so long deserted by our practical dramatists, Mr. Mackaye took on the aspect of a very old-fashioned young man, and this view of him was confirmed two years ago, when he wrote a very bitter and amusing burlesque upon the social dramas of Henrik Ibsen. What he seemed to find most comical in these social dramas was their solemn discussion of human marriage, and in particular, their assumption that the thing might be improved. I myself enjoyed "Anti-Matrimony" hugely, both on reading it and on seeing the troupe of Miss Henrietta Crosman act it, for there was undoubtedly a lot of sharp humor in it—and I am so steady a believer in old Henrik and his dramatic method that it gives me no uneasiness to see him and it lampooned. Satire, like the colic, is fatal only to the infantile and the senile. The sturdy man or idea survives it unharmed, and not only survives it but actually fattens on it.

But, to get back to Mr. Mackaye, what are we to think of that scorpion now? What are we to think of a man who sits down, after publishing an acidulous burlesque upon the social drama, and straightway writes a social drama five times as solemn and ten times as hortatory as any that Ibsen himself ever

wrote—a social drama outshining Shaw and outbarking Barker and coming dangerously near the pathological outposts of Strindberg, Wedekind and Brieux?

And yet that is just what Mr. Mackaye has done in "TOMORROW." Its theme is precisely that of Ibsen's "Ghosts," and the handling thereof is considerably more pontifical than in "Ghosts," for since the latter was written the sum of knowledge about heredity has been considerably augmented by many searchers, and so it is possible to speak with some assurance about things which Ibsen could only discuss vaguely and by indirection. The heroine of "TOMORROW" is merely Ibsen's Mrs.

Alving with a bachelor's degree in biology—a Mrs. Alving able to look ahead as well as backward—a potential tragedy queen who saves herself in time. In consequence there is no young Oswald in the play, to cry for the sun and spoil the midnight lobsters of the squeamish. Senator Julian Henshaw, like old Kammerherre Alving, is perfectly willing to transmit his name and his taint to such a son, and since he is a handsome fellow, romance becomes his strong partisan; but though Mana Dale is carried off her feet by his wooing, she comes back to earth in time to save herself and the unborn. The Mendelian laws of heredity are as familiar to Mana as the latest styles from Paris. She is the daughter of Peter Dale, the famous plant breeder, and biology is a fireside topic in the Dale home. So when she discovers that the blindness of the Senator's illegitimate child, little Rosalie, is an inheritance from his side of the house and not from the side of Rosalie's anonymous mother, she tells the Senator without further ado that he will have no further children if she can help it. "Mana! Mana!" he cries. "You've promised! I mustn't lose you! I can't!" But Mana is as adamant. "Not you," she answers. "Not you!" And when, "clinging to her hysterically," he continues to importune her, she tears herself from him, cries, "Let me go!" and "rushes into the bungalow, closing the door."

If this play on a fair reading strikes the reader as a bit absurd, he will prob-

ably agree that its absurdity lies not in its theme but in its working out. The trouble with it, in brief, is that Mr. Mackaye, forgetting the example of Ibsen, has neglected to transmute its ideas into emotions—a process necessary before any stage play can show genuine effectiveness. The effect of "Ghosts" is staggering, not because Ibsen's belief that Mrs. Alving erred agitates our minds, but because Oswald's terrible death wrings our hearts. In "TOMORROW" Mr. Mackaye fails to get any such emotional appeal into his story. His argument is always dignified, but it is never quite moving. The one appreciably dramatic scene of the play goes close to melodramatic fustian. Mana, wringing the Senator's confession from him, dismisses him as I have described—and then a rival lover bobs up and throws him over a cliff! On Third Avenue, I have no doubt, that climax would satisfy an audience to the full, but the persons who follow the play of ideas demand a somewhat closer welding of Q. E. D. and *sforzando*. If a clash of wills brings down the second act curtain, it must be the principal clash of wills and not a subordinate clash of wills. The *deus ex machina*, however graceful his descent, is always an irritating invader.

To make matters worse, Mr. Mackaye gives his characters speeches which drop them to the level of the rubber stamp stock company. The Senator, for example, says a number of things that might have been taken from some mouldering prompt book of Augustin Daly. Once he and Mark Freeman, his rival for Mana's heart, have an old-fashioned villainous-squire-and-honest-yeoman dialogue. "Go, I say!" bawls the Senator. "This is my land. You are trespassing." "You, sir," returns the virtuous Mark, "are trespassing on the Creator's land." And then the Senator launches into a Boucicaltian tirade against Mana's father, who has begun to make inquiries regarding the hereditary lesions of his family. "My family!" he sneers. "He, a gardener, of a breed of farmers and ranchmen—he to quibble about family! Let him know that my



father was a justice, and I am a Senator. We are no common stock." Needless to say, he is in riding togs when he makes this speech—the villainous squire is seldom out of them. Can't you see him switch his glossy boots with his riding crop and twirl his ebon mustache and discharge cigarette smoke through his nose? Certainly Mr. Mackaye must do better next time. If he would write serious plays, plays of ideas, he must be careful to steer clear of banalities. The fact that he has laughed at Ibsen stands eternally against him. Let him beware lest it also consume him!

In his "YANKEE FANTASIES" he is more at home, but even here his promise falls considerably below his achievement. What he is trying to do, judging by the tone of his preface, is to stage the New England peasant as the late J. M. Synge (whose name, by the way, he spells Singe) staged the peasant of Mayo and the Arran Islands. But he makes the profound mistake, at the very start, of putting an incredibly complex and artificial language into the mouths of his *musicals*. Here, for example, is how a village ne'er-do-well is made to orate to his sweetheart!

. . . I reckon we can nose for our livin' as good as them other gipsies. I've watched 'em sence I was so high—the chuckfolks. Durn if I don't think they're happier'n menfolks. They ain't domestic, nor they ain't wild, but they live on the fat o' both stock. . . . Housefolks hoe and harrer; chuckfolks feed and farrer. Housefolks borrow trouble; chuckfolks lend it out at interest. Housefolks help the devil; chuckfolks help 'emselves.

Note the neat antitheses, the note of conscious cleverness. And here is how that dunghill Macaulay takes his girl to wife!

Reverend Mr. Wood—of the renowned family of Chucks—we, male and female, of your honor's own kin and communion, bein' nat'ral born sinners (and glad of it), poachin' in your honor's parish (off and on) for some twenty seasons (more or less), and havin' published our banns (from time to time) in the presence of chipmunks, woodcocks and water wagtails, duly assembled therefor, do now respectfully petition your experienced worship to unite us, one t' other, in the blessin's of wedlock, accordin' to the ancient rites and ceremonies of orchard communities. . . . Yours truly—Amen!

Allowable enough, perhaps, in blank verse—but Mr. Mackaye is here writing prose. Even prose, of course, can be poetry. But the prose of a Harvard professor cannot be the poetry of a Vermont yokel, in or out of a play. Let Mr. Mackaye, before he manufactures any more of these "YANKEE FANTASIES," give a bit of hard study to the plays of Synge—in particular to "The Tinker's Wedding," "Riders to the Sea" and "The Shadow of the Glen." There he will discover what peculiar qualities distinguish peasant poetry, not only as to form and expression but also as to direction and content.

More plays—plays in blank verse, plays in blankety-blank verse, plays in prose. Of those of the first class, the most important is "THE WAR GOD," by Israel Zangwill, that cleverest of Asiatics (*Macmillan*). Here we have a fantastic tragedy with a sobered Zenda for its scene, and Bismarck, Tolstoi and Wilhelm II, thinly disguised, for its principal characters. Bismarck (Count Torgrim) is preparing a grand assault upon Perfidious Alba (England) when Brog, an anarchist, assassinates his commanding general, Count Holk (Von Moltke?). Brog, it appears, proposes to follow up this beginning by slaying all the other generals, Torgrim himself and the whole royal family, but in carrying out his plan he is halted by the appearance of Count Frithiof (Tolstoi), an apostle of peace. Frithiof, at the start, really helps the anarchists, for his first conquest is of the army, and so the pursuit of Holk's assassin lags; but in the end he does so much execution among the Reds themselves that Brog resolves to kill him. Too late, alas, too late! The red flag turns to white; the "Marseillaise" melts into the Doxology! The fair destroyer told off to shoot Torgrim loses her ardor; the King suddenly becomes a Frithian; Torgrim is dismissed; instead of steel projectiles, kisses are hurled across the sea to Alba!

A curious and extremely interesting piece, well fashioned and full of originality, and with more than one ringing line in the verse. But that it is a work of genius, as various English critics have

certified, I doubt exceedingly. The success it lately scored in England was largely a *succès de scandale*. The Licensor of Stage Plays, with traditional imbecility, balked at its public performance, apparently in fear that it would offend Germany—and the newspapers did the rest. Let the Licensor prohibit a play and its fortune is made, however modest its merit. Consider, for example, "The Breaking Point," by Edward Garnett, a piece much nearer to French melodrama than to the drama of ideas, and yet one solemnly published, with all the bravery of a polemical introduction, and as solemnly read—all because Mr. Redford refused to license it! "THE WAR GOD," of course, is far better stuff, if only because of Torgim, a life-like and arresting portrait. But even so, it is by no means a play that carries the art of playmaking forward, or one that makes any appreciable contribution to the world's stock of ideas. Far better have been forgotten for lo, these many years.

Blank verse again. To wit, in "SHERWOOD," by Alfred Noyes, the English poet (*Stokes*), a suave and workmanlike rendering of the familiar story of Robin Hood and Maid Marian, with the addition of a fairy element. Suave and workmanlike—but not glowing, not gorgeous, seldom inspired. Save, indeed, in his lyrics and in occasional passages of exhortation and soliloquy, Mr. Noyes shows little of that prodigality of language, that luscious word music, that arresting unexpectedness which we associate, bearing the Elizabethans in mind, with dramatic blank verse. Too often it is mere prose that he writes—prose deft and graceful, but still mere prose. That charge cannot lie against Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff, author of "ALCESTIS" (*Privately printed*), for here a constant novelty and ingenuity of epithet are visible. Mrs. Wagstaff, in truth, sometimes goes to the opposite extreme and her adjectives run riot. But her little play, it must be confessed, has a considerable dignity nevertheless. That same quality is uppermost in

"THE WIFE OF MAROBIUS," by Max Ehrmann (*Kennerley*), a metrical fragment showing faint suggestions of "Hedda Gabler," for its protagonist is a wife oppressed by the laws of physiology and its end is melodrama. Mr. Ehrmann has an acute ear; his verse is full of those subtle rhythms which lie deeper than the *cæsuras* of the pedants. Finally comes Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, with a group of seventeen one-act plays in irregular and rhymeless verse. Their collective title is "DAILY BREAD" (*Macmillan*), and they present grim pictures of the lives of the poor. Not much poetry here, nor even, in the conventional sense, much drama; but all the same the dusk of tragedy is in them, and the reader who reads one will probably read all—and then be a long time forgetting them.

So goes space—and five plays remain. Or rather, two plays and three books of plays. One of the first is Paul Wilstach's effective stage version of Anatole France's "THAÏS" (*Bobbs-Merrill*), lately a rival to Massenet's opera in popular favor. The other is the late Leo Tolstoi's posthumous tragedy, "THE LIVING CORPSE" (*Brown*), a piece somewhat old-fashioned in structure but still touched with fire. Feodor Vasilyevich Protasov, at odds with his wife, resolves to set her free, and so he goes through the mummery of a pretended suicide. The wife thereupon marries an old lover, and Feodor departs with a gipsy woman. Later on the deception is discovered, the police take to the trail of all concerned, and Feodor, to make an end of the scandal, commits suicide in earnest. The three collections of plays are "PLAYS OF PROTEST," by Upton Sinclair (*Kennerley*); "THREE FARCES," by Arnold Bennett (*Doran*), and "EMBERS," by George Middleton (*Holt*). Mr. Middleton's pieces are one-acters—somber little things without much action, but showing serious purpose and a considerable technical facility. Mr. Bennett's are drawing room extravagances in the Gilbert manner. Mr. Sinclair's are longer—and far less diverting.

# SOMETHING PERSONAL

By the Publisher

WE are celebrating. It is not a wedding anniversary, as was suggested by someone who had an early and private view of our cover. It is quite another sort of fête. Just a year ago I began publishing THE SMART SET, the first number for which I was entirely responsible being that of June, 1911. Let me give you a little survey of the progress made by the magazine during the past twelve months.

In the first place, the appearance of the magazine, both externally and internally, has been very greatly improved. Instead of a conventional and lifeless cover design, which was always the same, there is now each month a new, clever and attractive drawing illustrating an amusing epigram. This arrests attention, informs the public that a new number has been issued and makes the magazine as alive outside as it is inside. Each number also contains a beautiful frontispiece by an artist of renown. The printing and make-up have been made more artistic and satisfying to the eye, and the appearance of the advertisements is now exceptionally attractive.

The literary standard of the contents has also been much improved. The editors have constantly before them a definite ideal. Their aim is to produce a magazine which shall contain:

Spice.....without Vulgarity  
Liberty.....without License  
Decency.....without Prudery  
Romance.....without Puerility  
Realism.....without Grossness  
Wit and Humor . without Malice  
Subtlety.....without Obscurity  
Literary Art . . . without Pedantry

and always, above all, human interest, human character, human action—the throbbing of the pulse of life.

Energy, activity, never ceasing effort all along the line must be continually exerted if a magazine is to hold its place and be “a live one,” and particularly if it is to grow and increase its importance. In the case of THE SMART SET, energy, activity and effort have been exercised in a remarkable degree, and the results are becoming more and more manifest every day. There is evidence on every hand that the public has sensed the current that is inevitably propelling the magazine on to a greater success than it ever had before, even in its palmiest days. Every month of late has shown a very gratifying increase of circulation.

The following letter from a physician typifies the attitude of thousands:

A few evenings since, I came across a copy of a coverless magazine in my home. Inspection proved it to be THE SMART SET. How it came there I am yet unable to solve. Had I suspected it, or had its identity been revealed by the familiar blue cover with its serpentine “S’s” of red, I am sure it would never have found its way into my hands. This was the first copy of THE SMART SET I had read in about ten years, due to an idea I had conceived at that time of this magazine being about the most foppish thing that was offered to the public under the guise of clever fiction. I thought it excellent pabulum for the inactive brain of a “sweet young thing” who wanted something to interest her from the time she breakfasted in bed until it was time to dress for the matinee to see John Drew. However, I wanted something to read, so I ventured further and read the entire number, including the publisher’s “personal.” It occurred to me then that I had some vague recollection of having heard that THE SMART SET had changed hands; but I had not been sufficiently impressed with the fact to induce me to purchase a copy. Tell the world in a strong self-confident article that The John

Adams Thayer Corporation now owns and publishes *THE SMART SET*; that it is really clever and if you don't believe it just get a copy and see; and, that if you don't read *THE SMART SET* you are missing the best fiction magazine published.

The high class advertisers, too, are showing in no uncertain way their appreciation of the value of the new *SMART SET* as a medium for reaching buyers of comforts and luxuries—of advertised goods. The increased confidence that high class advertisers now have in *THE SMART SET* may best be shown by a comparison of the advertising in the magazine for a number of months past and the corresponding months of the preceding period.

The advertising increase over the same issue of the preceding year is as follows:

October, 1911.....	6%
November, 1911.....	11%
December, 1911.....	75%
January, 1912.....	52%
February, 1912.....	170%
March, 1912.....	100%
April, 1912.....	237%
May, 1912.....	166%

I make no apology for introducing the subject of advertising in these pages. The normal reader is interested in advertising. It is one of the salient facts of modern life and cannot be ignored. To be sure, many people have but a vague idea of its cost. I recently heard of a woman who supposed that an advertiser paid perhaps one hundred dollars for the back cover page of *The Ladies' Home Journal*. "The price is ten thousand dollars," she was told. "Ten thousand!" she exclaimed. "Is that for the entire year?" It was hard to convince her that that respectable sum would suffice merely for a single issue.

The price of the back cover page of *THE SMART SET*, printed in two colors, is only five hundred dollars per issue, and every issue since the change of ownership has been occupied by a full page announcement. For many months we held an order for the back cover of this present number, but a short time

ago the advertiser changed his plans and the space could not be used by him. With every publication, however, there occasionally comes a time when a back cover page is unsold. I have been through this same experience with three of the leading publications of the country. At one time, as I have told elsewhere, I was part owner of a magazine which had one of these important back cover pages left open. There was only a week in which to find a customer at the fixed price. We had announced an edition of a million copies, and this space, which at the old rate had gone as high as two thousand dollars, had now doubled in value. Who would buy a page worth four thousand dollars? Then I had an inspiration. Why not advertise it? Such a thing had never been done, but what of that? The very day my advertisement appeared in the morning *Sun* it brought a customer.

In thinking over this unsold page of *THE SMART SET*, I had another inspiration. If our back cover is worth five hundred dollars to a high grade advertiser—and there is no question about this fact—why not use it myself? A plan followed hard on the heels of the idea. There are over thirty thousand newsdealers throughout the country, most of whom sell *THE SMART SET*. It would be expensive to reach them by letter; it would cost four times what we should receive for the cover. But there is intelligence among the majority of these dealers, and the back cover page you see on this issue of *THE SMART SET* has been specially designed to appeal to them. Consciously, I cannot prove to myself that it will be profitable, but subconsciously I know that thousands of newsdealers will be so impressed with the unusual fact that this magazine has two cover pages instead of one, that they will put two piles of *THE SMART SET* on their counters where one pile stood before and thereby gain us new readers among those who have not yet learned that this is the best magazine of fiction published anywhere at any price. Of course the old friends of *THE SMART SET* ask for it. They know what they want.